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AYESHA OF THE BOSPHORUS



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AYESHA OF THE BOSPHORUS

A Romance of Constantinople

BY STANWOOD COBB

Author of

"THE REAL TURK"

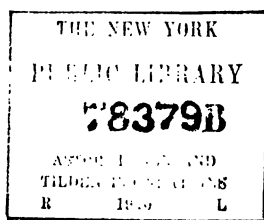


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AYESHA OF THE BOSPHORUS

CHAPTER I

COMMENCEMENT



T was commencement day at the American College for Girls. Roland Carver, with others from Hissar, landed from the little Chir-
ket steamer at Kouskounjuk and the party began the steep ascent which led to Scutari.

It was June. The sun beat down from a cloudless Constantinople sky and was reflected back in a glaring dazzle from the white stone pavements. Some preferred to follow the road circling about the hill; but Carver, with two others, took a narrow, steep path which mounted almost perpendicularly, built up into a long series of stone steps.

"Hey, fellows, let's rest a minute and enjoy the view," cried Carver, as they neared the top.

"Hang the view!" called out Prentice, a

little ahead. "You are always stopping to enjoy views. But I don't mind resting a bit."

All three stopped, took off their hats, wiped the perspiration from their wet foreheads, and turned around to look back at the glorious panorama of the Bosphorus spread out before them. The palace of Beylerbey lay at their feet, and across the water they could see Dolma Baghtcheh, the gem of Turkish palaces. From the high point they had reached the eye could follow the waterfront far up the stream — quaint, huddled Turkish villages, with their busy quays alternating with vast estates of pashas, which extended their gardens to the water's edge.

Never had this enchanted Bosphorus looked more sparkling. Amethystine blue, its waters seemed to dance for joy, the wind and current making little waves which kissed the sunlight lying in them. For several miles the narrow strait wound between promontories lined with houses, until it disappeared at last behind the picturesque old towers of Mohammed, built when he captured Constantinople in 1453.

It was the end of the brief Constantinople



spring. The bloom of the peach trees which had sprinkled the April days with tender pink had yielded to the Judas tree, more red, and to the luxurious green of Turkish gardens. Just a little way ahead was a Turkish café, its shaded terrace situated at an excellent vantage point for a wide view of the Bosphorus,—for few races love the beauties of Nature as do the Turks.

“Let’s sit down awhile and have some coffee,” suggested Petrides, the third of the party, a Greek. “We have plenty of time. It’s only two o’clock.”

They settled themselves comfortably around a small table, ordered coffee, and began to smoke Turkish cigarettes — silently, in Oriental fashion. The coffee soon came. Under the spell of coffee, tobacco, and the scent of wisteria blossoms roofing them in, dreamily viewing the fairy-like scene spread before them, they might have spent half the afternoon there, oblivious of the American College for Girls, of commencement, of the purpose of their trip — for so the Orient brings Lotus-like forgetfulness upon one; but Prentice looked at his watch, began to grunt, and to fumble in his pocket for coins.

"Time to be going," he said, and beckoning the waiter, paid him.

All got up slowly—stretching themselves, shaking off the charming sense of infinite repose and lethargy which had settled on them—and began the further ascent to Scutari and to the American College.

When they arrived all was bustle and excitement. The Montenegrin gate-keeper, dressed for the occasion in gorgeously gold-braided costume, his belt stuck full of long, murderous-looking pistols and of Turkish daggers, admitted them, smiling.

"Bu aksham chok guzel dir" (*This is a fine afternoon*), he said, as they passed. They reached the hall just in time, and were ushered by two pretty Bulgarian girls to the seats reserved for the Robert College teachers. There they found the rest of the party, which, tortoise-like, had reached the goal first.

At three o'clock the student chorus rose to sing, rendering an anthem very creditably; and then to march music the twelve seniors in cap and gown passed up the aisle and took their places on the platform. One face particularly attracted Carver's attention—a

delicate oval face crowned by hair as glorious as the sky's deep black in a tropic, star-lit night.

"Who is that girl in the first row, third from the right?" he inquired of Mrs. Hawthorne beside him.

"Oh, don't you know? That is Ayesha — one of the few Turkish girls ever to graduate here." Then she added archly, "But look out, Mr. Carver! Turkish girls are not to be fallen in love with!"

"Not much chance," answered Carver, smiling — but thought what exquisite beauty, what charm and grace, she had.

He set himself to wondering what her mind was like, her inner personality. Certainly so fair a body must clothe a lovely soul. He wondered what she was thinking of now as she looked raptly upward, out into the future. His desire was to be unexpectedly gratified, for soon she rose and performed her part in the program — a paper on "The Modern Woman."

It was a splendid address to come from a girl of any race, but especially from the despised Turk. Calm, dispassionate, thoughtful, this Turkish girl outlined some of the

problems which the New Woman has to face in the conflict between the call of home and of life. Earnest, pure, appealing, her beautiful voice and manner carried conviction — and Carver for once failed to analyze which factor counted most in his delight, the pleasure of a splendid speech, or the charm of beauty, both of soul and body.

When, in concluding, Ayesha made a plea for the home as primal in its claim, Carver gave a sigh of relief, — voicing the unconscious thought, "Then she would herself love to make a home." Under Oriental skies strange thoughts and sudden fancies strike the mind, when houri faces charm!

After the exercises were over and the girls had received their degrees, all adjourned to the beautiful garden of the College where tea was served, — daintily gowned students, Bulgarian, Greek, Armenian, gliding in and out among the crowd with trays of tea, of cake and of ice cream, which they bashfully, as Oriental girls do, proffered to the guests.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Carver," came a voice at his elbow — and Miss Frazier, one of the teachers at the College, cousin of an old friend of his, greeted him cordially.

"Don't you want to meet some of the graduates?"

He accepted the invitation gladly, but, bashful, dared voice no preference. His hand and greeting were given to an Armenian girl, homely and hare-lipped, to whom he was introduced; but his eyes followed a form and an exquisite face which glowed beside him.

Destiny was in his favor!

"Ayesha," called Miss Frazier, "I would like to introduce my friend Mr. Carver, a teacher at Robert College."

She bowed demurely, and gave her hand — a privilege for which the greatest pashas would have sued in vain, accorded to an American because that was the American custom and because she loved all things American.

Miss Frazier had hurried away to greet some of the other friends. An embarrassing silence fell between them.

At last, awkwardly, Carver asked, "Have you enjoyed your college course?"

"Very much," she said.

"What studies did you like best?"

"I think I like history and sociology best."

"That showed in your address," he said, forgetting his self-consciousness in enthusiastic praise. "It was a splendid address, splendid! The best of the whole afternoon!"

She blushed. "Thank you; I enjoyed giving it."

"And what are you going to do," he asked, "now that you have graduated? Are you going to study your favorites abroad?"

"No, not yet, at least. I am coming back here next fall to teach."

"Oh!" Surprise and unconcealed pleasure showed in his voice. "I hope you will enjoy that. I suppose you love your Alma Mater."

"I love it above everything else in the world," she said earnestly — and for the first time looked him full in the eyes. "It has been everything to me. It has indeed been a 'kindly mother,' for I have no other mother living; and more than that, it has taught me so many things — it has opened my eyes, broadened my thoughts, disclosed to me the whole wonderful world of modern knowledge."

Her face glowed. She forgot her Turkish modesty and smiled at him in intellectual comradeship. Carver was on the point of

carrying this interesting conversation further, but Ayesha suddenly excused herself as a teacher called her to meet other guests,—for she was the chief attraction of the day.

She gave him her hand again, this time not laid passively in his, but with a warm touch that encouraged him to ask, "I hope, then, I shall have the pleasure of seeing you next fall?"

"I hope so," she said, smiling again charmingly, and was gone.

Ice cream and cake were brought Carver, and he felt it his duty to go about and greet the teachers whom he knew. But his conversation was forced, his eyes preoccupied, and at times his head turned involuntarily when Ayesha passed near by. Soon he made his farewells and hunted up Prentice and Petrides and they started back for Kous-kounjuk, where they hired a kayik to take them to Hissar.

It was a wonderful evening for a kayik ride. The sunset colors — spread gorgeously, as only Constantinople can spread them in her western sky — made the waters of the Bosphorus a fairy sheen, reflecting tints and hues that glow not elsewhere out of

paradise. The lush scent of an Oriental spring perfumed the night air and intoxicated senses that were already aw whirl in a maze of beauty. Overhead the crescent moon—symbol of the sacred East—floated tremulous, mystic, pure of ray, athwart the evening sky.

Talk languished. Thoughts drifted out beyond the twilight range of consciousness. Everything seemed asleep in Carver save his soul,—which was gloriously awake, supremely soaring above the unreal, as all things earthly seemed just then.

Prentice first broke the silence. "What are you thinking of, Petrides? You're as quiet as a clam."

Petrides smiled one of his slow, unpassionate smiles, the corners of his mouth lingering in reminiscence of it even after it had died out from his eyes and the dimples had gone from his cheeks.

"I am dreaming of that Turkish girl," he said. "Wasn't she beautiful?"

"What, Ayesha?" answered Prentice. "Say, boys, I am struck on her myself. How about you, Carver? You've been mooning away worse than 'Pet' here. Did you fall in love with her too?"

No smile responded on Roland's face. More than once the breezy Americanism of Prentice had jarred on him,—never more than now.

"I found her very charming," he said — lit a cigarette and retreated into dreams again.

All sighed when Hissar was reached. It seemed a pity to leave the ideal twilight beauty of the Bosphorus.

CHAPTER II

AYESHA



THE summer had passed pleasantly for Carver in a tour of Italy and Switzerland. Now he was back at Hissar, ready for the winter's work. The first week was taken up with afternoon teas, calling on the families of American professors who, glad in June to break the boredom of a too-restricted and monotonously enforced society, were just as glad in September to welcome each other back to the college, eagerly inquiring and exchanging accounts of the summer's varied travels.

It was Carver's second year in Constantinople. The strange Orientalism of his new environment had kept him deeply interested and absorbed the previous year. But now his restless nature, having devoured the sights and shows of Turkish life, craved the mild dissipation of society. Perhaps to this

temptation is laid the fact that he made more frequent visits to the mid-week teas of the American College for Girls than was considered manly in the ultra-masculine and Antinomian set of bachelor instructors who disdained, so they claimed, feminine society and pink teas.

"Say, Carver, why don't you apply for a job at the American College?" twitted Prentice one day as Carver returned home from a tea, his face glowing. "There's some pretty nice teachers over there — good deal more fun than to associate with us old rubes."

A blush on Carver's face was a signal for further attacks. "Who is he interested in now?" asked Glover.

"Why, don't you know? It's that Turkish girl," called out Walker from the end of the table.

It was only a chance shot, but hit home more nearly than any guessed. Carver grew red to the ears, cried out, "Bosh laff!" which is Turkish for "nonsense," and confined himself assiduously to eating.

The truth was, he had just returned from a tea at which he had met and talked, for the first time since last year's commence-

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ment, with Ayesha; and his heart still sang within him and his blood glowed exquisitely within his veins,—for this was the Orient, where the dreams of a minute seem a year and a year seems but a day.

In his first visits to Scutari he had looked in vain for Ayesha. Perhaps she had not returned as she intended; perhaps she was ill,—he did not dare ask. One day when he plucked up courage to inquire of Miss Frazier, she told him that Ayesha was rather shy about appearing before men, and generally retired, Turkish fashion, when male guests were announced. Did she divine his feelings? This day when Carver was the only guest she said, "I'll get Ayesha. She won't be afraid of you. Besides, she met you last year, didn't she?"

Carver's happiness rose to the sticking point. That which is rare is precious. So he treasured this opportunity to see and speak once more with Ayesha. Had she been the average woman, yet would distance have invested her with charm. But Ayesha! Well, she was just Ayesha. If Carver had been asked to describe her fascination he could not have done so, any more than he could

look her in the face as she came in with Miss Frazier and greeted him modestly. He became tongue-tied and sipped his tea, kindly refuge in conversational distress! Miss Frazier tactfully carried on the conversation until Carver recovered sufficiently to take his part in it. When she saw they were on good speaking terms she excused herself and left the room a minute to see about the tea things. Carver and Ayesha were alone together.

Suddenly a daring resolution formed itself in Carver's mind. "Miss Ayesha," he said — he could hardly control his vocal organs — "would you like to take a short walk with me? Or wouldn't it be proper for a Turkish girl?"

Ayesha, laughing, showed pearly teeth. "These are new days in Turkey," she said — "days of glorious freedom."

"Then you would be willing to walk with me?"

"With pleasure — but not today. Perhaps next Wednesday."

"I shall call for you next Wednesday, then? About what time?"

"About this time — or perhaps a little

earlier. Then we can have our tea and get away before people begin to come."

Could Carver believe his ears? Was she, Ayesha, actually making an engagement with him for a walk? She, a Turkish girl? Nothing like it had happened in all history, he thought — and he was right; but this, as Ayesha said, was the New Day.

Just then other guests arrived — strangers to Carver. But he had had his opportunity and had richly profited by it. He went home in a daze. That is why he blushed when Ayesha was mentioned. That is why his heart sang even as he ate.

The week passed slowly, tantalizingly, until Wednesday came. The steamer to Scutari that afternoon seemed obstinately to want to stop at every little scala which it usually passed by. One of the professors with his wife was on the boat, evidently going also to Scutari. Carver dodged them, was the first off the boat, and charged up the hill like one of Napoleon's Old Guards. His one thought was to get off with Ayesha before visitors began to come. For some reason he felt shy, almost guilty about being seen with Ayesha. He knew how tongues

would wag in Hissar if they were seen going out together.

On arriving he sent up his card by Miss Frazier. It seemed ages before Ayesha came down to greet him. She, too, seemed constrained and shy. They gulped down tea in silence, and excusing themselves were off, luckily before any guests were announced.

"Where shall we go?" asked Carver. "You know Scutari better than I do."

"Let's take the back road to the top of Tchamlejah. Have you ever seen the view from there?"

"No."

"Oh, then I can show you something beautiful," she cried, clapping her hands. "Come, come!"

They left the college grounds by a rear gate, unobserved. Ayesha wore a European costume and a cloak with high collar, so that Turks meeting her would not have recognized that she was of their race. Besides, it was chiefly an Armenian district they were to pass through. It was well not to incur publicity; for even a free Turkey did not mean that of a sudden all Turkish minds were freed from the trammels and

beliefs of centuries. In some of the native quarters Turkish women had been insulted and even mobbed for travelling about too freely.

Had Carver known this he would not have asked Ayesha to take such risks. Ayesha knew it, but she did not care. Rejoicing in the new-found liberty and freedom of her people, she scorned the danger of a too great departure from the old conventions. Some souls are born to be pioneers. Such was Ayesha.

For some time they ascended the hill in silence. Gradually the houses of Scutari merged into the general landscape spread below them and the shores of the Marmora began to appear, thickly dotted with quaint suburbs.

"See," said Ayesha, pointing to the famous cemetery of Scutari — "that cemetery is said to be the largest in the world"; and added smiling, "the only pre-eminence Turkey can boast of today is in her cemeteries. As the dead sleep peacefully there, so the minds of the Turks today sleep under the weight of ignorance and inertia."

"But surely," said Carver, "you must

rejoice that your country is now awakening so wonderfully from the sleep of ages."

"It is high time!" replied Ayesha. "Just think — at one time the Turks were one of the most progressive races of Europe. Pre-eminent in battle, they possessed the finest corps of mining engineers in the world. Under Suleyman the Magnificent, Turkey added the luster of a great civilization to glory gained from conquests. The greatest sovereigns of Europe sued for his favor. And now," sighing — "now, only the jealousies of Europe have preserved us from absolute destruction."

"What do you think is the cause of this backward condition?" ventured Carver. "Has Abdul Hamid's reign ruined the country?"

"No; the cause lies deeper than that, I fear. While the rest of Europe, and your race in particular, have progressed through industry and science to the wonderful civilization of today, Turkey has stagnated, has rested content with medievalism."

"You are certainly a frank critic of your own race. It seems to me you have given the correct analysis of the trouble. I would

not have wanted to say it myself, though, for fear of hurting your feelings."

Ayesha laughed a silvery little laugh. "No danger of that," she said. "If my Alma Mater has taught me nothing else, it has taught me to face conditions honestly, and to realize the need of understanding the causes of things before we can change things for the better."

"That is a great lesson to learn," replied Carver. "After all, it is this spirit of criticism which has produced our twentieth century civilization. But it is wonderful how a few years of education have enabled you to catch this modern spirit."

"For that I am deeply indebted to the American College," she said seriously. Then, in a lighter tone, looking at him saucily,— "But why should it be a miracle, Monsieur Americano? Do you think Turkish people are differently constructed and have different brains from you?"

Carver blushed — "No! no! don't think that I meant that! I only meant —"

"You did mean it! You did mean it!" interrupted Ayesha, laughing and clapping her hands. "Confess you did!"

“Why —”

“Yes, you did!” cried Ayesha, and laughed again at his confusion. “I know that Americans think we Orientals are benighted and can never grasp the culture of the Occident. They think we are destined always to be inferior to them. But they do not realize how great a difference education makes in people. If an American child were brought up uneducated in a Turkish home he would be as stupid and as lazy as Turks are supposed to be. It is education that we need,—education, training, intellectual progress. Oh, Mr. Carver, I hope when you go back to America you will tell your people how much we need education! You Americans are kind and generous—you are doing so much for us already—but we need even more. How I long to see my people educated! And especially the girls,—for the ignorance of our women is one of the greatest causes of our national degradation. How can an ignorant, stupid mother train her children to be worthy men and women?”

As Ayesha made this little speech her voice became magnetic, her dark eyes sparkled, and her face glowed with enthu-

siasm. Carver looked at her entranced. She seemed inspired.

"Splendid," he cried, looking at her with admiring eyes.

She blushed, and seeing a couple of people coming towards them, turned up her collar and looked away — shutting off from Carver the one view to him worth while; for the magnificent scene opening before them held little beauty in his eyes compared to the fascination of her face.

Ayesha now became silent, self-conscious, suddenly again a modest, demure Turkish maiden. Nothing more was said until they reached the summit of Tchamlejah.

There they took seats at a small table belonging to a Greek café, ordered coffee, and sat looking at the beautiful scenery. In front of them the Principo Islands dotted the blue waters like an oasis of green; and the clustering villages along the shore stretched on and on for miles, as far as eye could reach. On their left lay a wide, rolling expanse of almost desert country, leading to the beautiful mountains of Bithynia on the horizon. Behind them the Bosphorus wound its glorious sheen, visible almost to the Black Sea.

The coffee was soon brought, and they sipped it in a companionable silence, dreamily absorbing the beauty of the Oriental scene and basking in the glorious sunlight.

"I think it is time to go," said Ayesha, at last. The sun was already casting long shadows, the air was fresher and more bracing than it had been. It seemed hard to stir. They got up reluctantly, paid for the coffee, and began their homeward way. No more speeches fell from Ayesha's lips, but she laughed and chatted over little things until the college gate was reached.

"Good-by," she said, holding out her hand. It seemed to Carver that he had never hated more this word "good-by." He grasped her hand and wanted to ask her if she would take another walk with him some day. Yet no words came. He could only murmur "Good-by!" and hurried down to the scala.

CHAPTER III

THE LETTER



THE eighteenth of December — first day of the Christmas vacation — found Carver in a novel environment. He had planned a trip to Egypt with his Turkish friend Nazim, also teacher at the college. When the time came, however, he found his savings much smaller than he had anticipated; and the only possibility of a trip to Egypt lay in travelling deck passage, as the middle and lower classes of the Orient do.

In summer this is a delightful mode of travel. One stakes out a claim on the deck — some six feet square — arranges his baggage about it as a barricade, spreads a yorghān, or mat, over the bare wood, and reclines luxuriously under the canvas awning. By day he sits thus, smokes cigarettes and dreams. At night he rolls himself up in his yorghān, with shoes for pillow, and sleeps

under the open stars. He is infinitely more comfortable and more happy than his fellow-travellers of the second or first class, for he lives entirely in the fresh open air and is lord of his little domain.

Carver had travelled this way, and had enjoyed it. But now it was a different matter. Too cold to sleep outdoors, the deck passengers had to herd together in a small cabin — unventilated save from the hatchways and reeking with the strong stench of smoke, garlic, and human exhalations.

Carver had come early and had secured a very desirable place in the corner, back of the stairway and somewhat secluded from the too vulgar gaze. He had placed his baggage on the bench which ran next to the wall — thus indicating his pre-emption by universal travellers' code — and had gone on deck to get a breath of fresh air and to look up his friend Nazim, who could not be induced to leave the comforts of first class in order to keep Carver company. He found him at the rail and they stood there some time watching the freight being loaded.

A half hour later Carver went below again to make sure that everything was

all right. It was fortunate he did. An old Turkish woman, fat and grumpy, evidently being of the same opinion as Carver in regard to the desirability of this especial corner, had jumped his claim, so to speak; had placed his baggage upon the floor; and was in process of stringing a curtain wholly across the corner in order to screen herself in.

Carver, seeing the situation, with small gallantry stopped operations on this roughly improvised harem by dumping the Hanoum's baggage on the floor and depositing his body on the place of contention; believing, no doubt, that said body, though usually more mobile than baggage, might in this case prove less so.

The Hanoum gibbered and jabbered in high rage, but to her Turkish invectives Carver proved obdurate; fellow-passengers joined in the outcry; and finally the quartermaster, a dark little Levantine, came up to adjudicate the matter. His inquiries from the Hanoum, from Carver, and from fellow-passengers seeming to prove Carver's claim to priority, and Carver's own body maintaining resolutely the rights of possession, proverbially equivalent to nine legal or theo-

retical rights, the quartermaster went away — wisely, and to Carver's great relief, leaving the situation in its *statu quo*, which after all is the easiest and most Oriental way of doing things.

Nazim, who had happened to peer down the hatchway at this moment, stood on the upper stairs howling with laughter. "Nice way to treat a poor old Turkish Hanoum!" he cried. "See how affectionate she is — wants to get as near to you as she can. Carver, you're a great one with the ladies!"

"Cut that out!" Carver shouted. "Come down here and visit a fellow."

"No thanks," said Nazim, who was somewhat of a dandy, holding his nose. "Don't like the smell. You come up and visit me."

"No, I can't!" said Carver, "Do you think I want to lose this hard-earned corner?"

"Well, stay and keep the Hanoum company, then," said Nazim. "I'm going on deck. Good-by!"—and he left Carver to his own reflections.

Strangely enough the smell of greasy human flesh, which was so unbearable to one

coming newly from the fresh air on deck, ceased after two or three hours to offend. In fact, it dropped below the threshold of consciousness for Carver during the rest of the voyage.

Besides, the weather was rough, and Carver had other things to think of, endeavoring now to retain possession not only of his seat, but of the lunch of which he had partaken,—efforts in which he was more fortunate than some of those around him. After that first lunch, the hamper of provisions put up at the college—a nice boiled chicken, eggs, bread, cheese, olives and fruit—lay untouched, while Carver lay in dizzy, somnolescent mood, dreaming feverish and light-headed day-dreams, and listening to the chatter and laughter of the some fifty-odd fellow-passengers. For two days he thus lay there, sleeping more than the allotted eight hours per day, eating nothing, and not unpleasantly resting even from thought.

On the third day the storm lulled, the sun came out gloriously, and Carver managed to pick himself up and reach the deck, where he basked in the golden sunlight and the

warmth of the Egyptian air, for they were nearing Alexandria.

Nazim joined him, also looking weak and pale. It turned out that he had eaten nothing, either, and had stayed in his berth these forty-eight hours. Carver laughed heartily at him.

"Here you have paid five times the amount I have, and for what? For the privilege of fasting and sleeping, as I did. The only difference was, you slept on a mattress and I on a bench."

As a matter of fact, Carver would not have exchanged for any amount the interesting below-deck experience of this trip and the opportunities it had given him of observing and studying the life of the common people in this far-off corner of the world — of studying them, not as an outsider, but as one of them by all rights of the great freemasonry of deck travellers.

Soon they came within the harbor of Alexandria. The air was soft and balmy and the sun shone deliciously warm out of a blue, unclouded sky. They landed after some difficulties on Carver's part, on account of quarantine regulations for deck passengers,

and were glad to be on *terra firma* again. After a few hours of sight-seeing, they took a train for Cairo and watched from their window the sands of the desert run by.

As Carver looked out over this wide expanse — so suggestive of infinity — he seemed absorbed and answered grudgingly the intermittent conversation of his friend. Thoughts and expectations were in his mind, the purport of which Nazim little dreamed. This train gliding so peacefully along the desert was bearing him swiftly toward one of the great crises of his life. In Cairo there was a letter waiting for him which might promise untold happiness, or destroy a golden dream.

It had happened in this way. After Carver's walk with Ayesha he had been unable to see her again. Every time he called at Scutari she failed to appear at tea. He looked up longingly at the windows of her rooms but he did not dare ask after her. Was she purposely avoiding him?

If "far from the eyes, far from the heart" be true of lovers, it is nevertheless also a matter of psychology that to know that a divine face, already tantalizing to one's

soul, is only a short distance from one's eyes, yet separated by material and social barriers, shut in, so to speak, in a fairy world of her own,—to know this is the greatest spur to love. It was a torment for Carver to come there to tea and find Ayesha missing. It was equally a torment for him to stay away. Between this Scylla and Charybdis he hovered for several weeks. Finally a desperate plan came into his head—a plan unreasonable, romantic, and daring. If he could not penetrate to her presence, yet he could communicate with her by mail. Since she was under American control a letter could be sent. This, even the most outrageous slings of fortune could not prevent from reaching her. Many times has the modern Cupid thus dropped bow and arrows in order to wield a pen.

One day, then, Carver sat at his desk and resolutely framed a message of his love, worded quite frankly,—explaining how he could not see her face to face, hence must write; begging her to accept his offer of marriage; and giving her time to think it over seriously. He asked her to write him after two weeks, in care of the general de-

livery at the Cairo post office, and explained why he had thus proposed by mail.

Then he sealed the letter and slept over it. If after the night's rest he felt in the same mood, he would mail it. If he should have a feeling that he was acting wrongly, he would destroy the letter. Such was often his custom in settling important questions. The relaxation of sleep leaves the mind much more clear for guidance — and Carver believed that he was often guided, by whom or by what he could not tell.

The next morning the sun danced merrily on blue, smiling waters of the Bosphorus. A north wind filled the air with vigor and Carver's soul with determination. No, he felt no warning, no holding back of the reins of Destiny. So with head high and beating heart, he placed the letter in the mail box, dropped the lid which now lay between him and Fate, and started upon his day's work with some difficulty of concentration.

Two weeks must pass before he was to expect an answer. He put the subject from his mind as best he could. On the boat to Egypt it had furnished, however, the chief topic of his dreams, and he had lain for

hours at a stretch in a sort of golden haze. Now he was on his way to a final decision, one way or another, of his hopes.

As soon as they reached Cairo and deposited their baggage in the hotel, Carver — greatly relieved that his companion wished to rest awhile — excused himself and made hastily for the post office. There was a line of five or six waiting at the window. One by one the line diminished — and Carver at last reached the window, gave his card to the clerk, and was handed a letter, the handwriting of which was new to him but was destined to cause him many heart throbs in the coming days.

Hastily he tore the envelope and read:

"My dear Mr. Carver:

I was very much surprised to receive your letter, and want to thank you for your kindness in thinking of me and appreciating me the way you do. But what you ask is impossible. Really, we hardly know each other, do we? Please forget these ideas, which can never be realized, and let me remain

Your friend,

AYESHA.

P.S. Please consider this letter as final."

Carver took the letter to the park across the square, sat down on a bench and watched the beautiful fountain spray its silver threads against the glorious blue sky. Birds were singing in the palms, the air was soft and sweet smelling, flowers bloomed about him as if it were summer. He tilted his head back against the seat for a few minutes and dreamed, absorbing the sunshine as did the plants about him. After a while the peace of Nature all around him entered into his soul. He opened his eyes, read the letter again, pressed it to his lips, and then arose.

"Very well," he said, "let us be friends. Inshallah!"

Submission, that quality of the Orient, sweetened his cup of disappointment. Strangely enough, he had even a feeling of relief. It was his first proposal. Had Ayesha accepted, he would not have known what to do with her. He would have been nonplussed. When could he marry her? How support her on his slender instructor's salary? All these considerations which love had blinded him to before now appeared upon the scales — so that the weight of his disappointment was far less. After all, there

are two sides to every problem. Perhaps things were better off as they were.

He was in the country of Islam, strange Eastern land — where desire burns bright within the soul, yet quickly flickers into dusk and the dark night of abnegation. It is easier to give up things in the East. So Carver found to his surprise; and he went about his sight-seeing with a fairly light heart and enjoyed the strange scenes of Cairo — the crowded streets, the markets, the Oriental quaintness of it all — far more than he could have believed possible. A camel trip into the desert restored peace to his soul and a climb up the pyramids brought back energy and aspiration. When after a week of this they took a steamer back to Constantinople, Carver felt that a chapter in his book of life had been closed, — a chapter full of romance, of unreasonableness perhaps, of golden dreams; of reawakening and descent to earth; of journeying again along the dusty plains.

CHAPTER IV

THE WALK TO BOYAJIKEUY



HE work of the new term progressed slowly. Carver had considerable time for reading during these long winter nights. He enjoyed going out to call after his classes, at some of the numerous married professors' houses, and chatting comfortably over a cup of tea: blessed institution for rainy days and ennui — the chief dissipation of the Hissar community when tennis and boating were forbidden by the weather.

After this social hour Carver would come back to his room, curl up on his couch and read. Books never seemed such close companions as in this distant corner of the globe. He for the first time became acquainted with Ibsen through one of the other instructors who was a devotee; and he felt happy that he was able to enjoy this most glorious new star in his firmament of literature.

Play after play he read, pouring over them, drinking in their deep lessons of life, admiring the wonderful art of the master. The strange women of Ibsen appealed to him, as did the unique psychological problems involved with them. He saw there the modern woman struggling to claim her destiny — the frail wings unfolded, still damp, from the chrysalis of a long winter — easily broken, easily crushed, but for those who failed others coming forth to take their place: and the vision of the future woman — strong, reliant, tender, and noble, throwing off the pettinesses bred in slavery, breathing for the first time a free spiritual breath under the air of heaven,— this inspired him; he longed to take a share in liberating woman, in aiding and hastening her evolution.

He sighed as he thought of it. It had been his dream to do this in a definite way, a joyous, happy way, the way of love. Modern woman, unfolding her powers, took for him a concrete form — Ayesha. He had hoped to share her life, to help her develop and express her talents, to lend her opportunity for playing a large part in the world. Yet the inner selfishness of his love appeared in this,

that now he had no hope to own her, he must cast her from his heart; and the very thought of her success apart from him was bitter.

How weak, how feeble is the small spark of altruism struck from the flint of self by love; true, it kindles a mighty fire oftentimes — but one in which the flames are chiefly those of lust. Carver lost all interest now in Ayesha's career. He could not bear to hear her name mentioned. It pained and wounded him.

In March a fine concert was given at the college. A noted cellist — one of the world's greatest — happening in his tour to pass through Constantinople, was engaged very reasonably through the efforts of a friend, both of his and of the college.

The hall was well filled by eight o'clock. The first number was Schubert's Serenade, played divinely and listened to with rapt attention by those Oriental boys, whose souls are more attuned to beauty than are the souls of their Western brothers. This sweet, unearthly melody of Schubert's carried Carver to another world. He shut his eyes and seemed to wander amid strange scenes.

He felt he was on another planet, where all was peace and love. Before him was a forest blooming in myriad forms of beauty, and sweet-scented; forth from which came a group of maidens, their faces sunlit, their whole beings expressing joy and the fragrance of pure happiness. There he thought he saw Ayesha; but he was powerless to move near, and as they were advancing the music stopped and the image unfortunately faded from his mind. He opened his eyes with a sigh. In the warm applause something made him turn his head. There was Ayesha walking up the aisle in company with Professor and Mrs. Sturdy. They took seats not far from Carver, a little to the front, and on the other side of the hall.

A strange feeling of mingled happiness and pain came over Carver. To have her thus near him was to be in paradise; but to have her eternally separated from his love, this was torture. He looked away, unwilling to kindle his love anew. Yet a compelling power turned his head surreptitiously in her direction—and he feasted his eyes on the delicate, queenly curve of her slender neck, on her crown of soft black

hair, on the profile slightly visible to him, only suggesting, but not disclosing the full beauty of her face. As he looked at her, she turned and her eyes met his. Each turned away abruptly.

The one glance, however, destroyed Carver's peace of mind for the evening. At intervals — short as he dared make them, long as his impatience could endure — he turned again and again to the beauty of that face. Strange! he found Ayesha several times looking in his direction, searching with her eyes for — could he dare guess himself?

Could it be that her letter was not final — a woman's no, yielding inwardly to yes? He did not dare hope that. Yet her actions seemed significant of interest, if nothing more; so much so that after the concert something emboldened Carver to go up and speak to her. She greeted him with a smile, half conscious — and a handshake, shy yet warm.

Was she to be in Hissar long? he asked. Yes, she was spending the week-end with Mrs. Sturdy. Would she take a walk with him next day, then? Yes, she would be

pleased to.—This in the brief moment of walking down the aisle.—“Good-by,” she said, and smiled on him as she left the hall.

As for Carver, he could scarcely think. He went to his room, shut himself up and sat on his sedia for half an hour in silent joy before going to bed. Even then he did not sleep till late in the night.

What had happened? Nothing definite. Yet the future was again opened to him — golden sunshine warmed his inner being — and roseate dreams ushered at length his soul to slumberland.

The next day at four he called for her at Professor Sturdy's. She came down veiled, and wrapped in a cloak of soft browns, a cloak which ever after, when he saw it, seemed impregnated with the charm of her gracious personality — seemed redolent with life, fragrance, and sunshine.

It was snowing slightly. Was she afraid of going out in it? No, she loved the soft falling flakes. They walked along the quay up the Bosphorus towards the little village of Boyajikeuy. Beside them swirled the whitish green waters of the Bosphorus, sullenly reflecting a leaden sky. But to Carver

all was sunshine; he could even hear birds singing and catch the fragrance of flowers, in the garden of his heart.

Ayesha prattled of her childhood days — of the happy girlhood — of her rebellion on entering at thirteen the harem, to be shut off from life forever after — of her father's progressiveness and desire that she should have an education, resulting finally in her entering the American College. She told how she had outgrown, in process of education, the primitive concepts and forms of her religion — how her soul rebelled against the Mohammedan paradise, whose favors are all for men — how her education had made her appreciate western ideals.

"Do you still feel yourself a Mohammedan?" Carver asked.

"Yes. But I see it in a different light. We need a reformation, a wave of protestantism, to purify Islam of its crude and childish beliefs. I am sure Mohammed meant to teach us far differently. But in speaking to a half-savage people like the Arabs, he was obliged to use symbols that would appeal to them. To win them over to a higher religion than their polytheism he had to

promise them a vivid paradise. We must not take his words too literally."

"You do not think, then, that he really meant to teach an after-life full of sensual joys?"

"Certainly not. Progressive Mohammedans interpret these things symbolically, as you Christians interpret the Apocalypse. Do you really believe, for instance, that you will walk on streets of gold, and play a golden harp?"

"No, I suppose not. But it is a pity that your prophet used such material symbols for his paradise as houris and eternal feasts."

"Mr. Carver," said Ayesha, seriously, "it would have been impossible otherwise to have won those savage Arabs. Do we not do everything for some ultimate reward? Is not the hope of happiness the greatest motive in life? How else could Mohammed have appealed to his followers, save by promising them joys such as they could understand? To a tired, life-worn soul the promise of eternal rest seems paradise. To the roaming Arabs, who often failed of food and lived for many months of the year in a state of half-starvation, the promise of eternal feasts was paradise.

“That was good pedagogy, was it not? But Mohammed did not intend that Moslems should always rest content with these simple figures. He knew that as the race progressed, it would one day be able to interpret them and see their inner meaning. The real paradise of the Mohammedan is the same as the real paradise of the Christian or of the Buddhist,—a place where one is freed from all the limitations of the flesh and where the soul, through its spiritualization, is bathed in eternal bliss.”

Ayesha suddenly stopped and breathed deeply. She seemed a little tired. “Oh, look at that beautiful bit of green sky in the west,” she said.

Carver turned and saw a wonderful sight. Between the banks of sad gray clouds an almost crescent rift appeared, disclosing a pale soft green that seemed flooded with translucent sunshine. All about them was snow and mist—yet somewhere the sun was shining, and existence was bright. So seemed the glimpse of heaven that Ayesha had just given him. He marvelled at her spiritual insight, and her gift of logical expression.

"What you say is true," he said. He wanted to add, "My dream of paradise is to be near you!"—but he could not say it; he could not, somehow, speak of love, as he had intended.

They had turned back and were already nearly home. Only a few minutes were left if Carver was to speak. They climbed the quaint stone stairway that led to upper Hissar. Professor Sturdy's house came in sight. They reached the door.

"Thank you for taking me on such a charming walk," said Ayesha.

"My thanks are due to you," said Carver—and turned to go as her door was opened.


"Good-by," said Ayesha, looking him straight in the eyes for the first time that day.

"Good-by," said Carver, and looked at her till the doorway swallowed her up.

Then he walked slowly back toward the college. Where were his warm words of love? Where was the declaration that faltered on his lips? He could not understand why he had failed to speak—not knowing the art that women have of guiding conversation as they wish!

CHAPTER V

THE SCUTARI RECEPTION

HE Constantinople spring came early this year, and by April the mud was drying on the roads, the fields had become less soggy, and had received a bloom of green. Already the snowdrop, pushing its way through the melting snow, had given its white virginity for a few days to the sun and then faded earthwards. The cyclamen had shyly hid its drooping head amid the underbrush, the primrose had dotted hillsides with its white blossoms, and here and there an Oriental anemone had lent its glory to the vernal days.

Now all these flowers had vanished and the hot sun, sucking the moisture from the ground, had produced a drier bloom,—the sweet scent of Judas blossoms, of the broom with its green and gold flowerings,

of heather which exhaled a delicious odor of the spring.

The hillsides were thick with Turkish women who sat for whole afternoons squatted on their heels, drinking in the sunshine and making "kef." Children played about them — and in and out candy-venders, dondomajis and wandering musicians plied their trades. The varied colors of the costumes, the fresh greensward against a tender sky, the outline of the hills upon the lovely blues of the Bosphorus, made these scenes idyllic.

No wonder that Carver, as he strolled of an April afternoon amid these pastoral scenes, dreamed of love. It was a time for love,— this season when the thrush sprinkled the air with liquid notes at eventide, and the nightingale ventured forth to thrill all listeners with its golden song. If one were not already in love he would on this occasion have invented a lady of dreams to deify and love. Love was in the air — was felt in every caress of the silent sunshine, was inhaled with every breath of April scent, was awakened in the dullest heart by the exultant melodies of Nature, who in spring draws all creatures to her Court of Love

and compels them to pay homage. If Carver had been in love last autumn he was doubly so now; and in his mind he was revolving a plan which, if successful, would resolve his doubts and make the road clear before him.

Some distance inland from the Bosphorus was a little village called the Polish Farms. It had been settled early in the nineteenth century by refugees from Poland, to whom Sultan Azis had kindly granted protection and rights of homestead. Here in this quaint village was a bit of Poland nestled in the heart of Turkey. Here no Turkish officials had right of entrance. The mayor was Polish, the houses Polish, the farms Polish,—and over all the village floated an air of tranquillity and peace.

It was a favorite resting place for American teachers during the monthly holidays. It made an ideal trip for the week-end. One could start on Saturday morning, sail up the Bosphorus a way, enjoy a delightful tramp of some nine miles to the Polish Farms, remain there over Sunday and return on Monday rested and refreshed for the work of the new month. The vacations of Robert

College and the American College for Girls usually came at the same time. Carver determined to get up an excursion for the month of May. He would invite several of the American ladies and some of his chums, — and then, when he was assured of a sufficient chaperonage, he would invite Ayesha. There seemed little chance of her accepting — but if she did, it would mean almost a certainty of his hopes being assured.

Fired with this idea he went home and wrote some notes. The mails soon brought him enough acceptances to guarantee a party; for the ladies of Scutari were very fond of going to the Polish Farms but could safely do so only when they had male escorts. The ladies secured, he set about finding men. Here he had more difficulty. His fellow-teachers, as has been already seen, were not fond of feminine society,—at least, in parties. Nor were the teachers of the American College for Girls noted for any hearty response to that half sentimental jollyng of which American young men are so fond. The springs of sex, diverted into intellectual channels, flow far too peacefully in most educated women. There are no

rapids, no shoals, no hidden whirlpools to tempt the adventure of Cupid. And so it appeared with the ladies of Scutari, that in devoting their lives to learning they had renounced love; and were assiduously, if not acidly, attentive to rebuff all advances in this direction. Hence it was with difficulty that Carver was able at last to extort a promise from two fellows to accompany him on this trip.

There only remained Ayesha! Not trusting to the fatality of letters, which had proved his downfall before, he was determined to give the invitation to her by word of mouth. To his glad surprise he found Ayesha among the group of faculty and guests which crowded the drawing-room of the American College on its monthly reception. He had hoped she would be there, but did not dare count on it. Yes, she was there — a red rose in her hair, a black dress with simple lace setting off the pure beauty of her form, her face glowing and animated in a conversation with two other men from Robert College.

The rascals! They had constantly made fun of these Scutari receptions — had habitually refrained from attendance — and yet

now that he wanted to see Ayesha, they were holding her attention. They may not have cared for the American teachers, but Carver paid them the grudging justice of admitting that their taste on this occasion was unassailable — that, in fact, they had managed to find the most beautiful, the most engaging woman in the whole assembly.

Would they never have done talking and laughing? He had not seen Ayesha so animated before. She ought to be more shy and modest. Yet here she was parrying the attentions of two jolly Americans, and seeming to enjoy it! Carver swallowed the tea brought him by a pretty Bulgarian girl, and answered absent-mindedly the greetings of Miss Frazier,—but his eyes and mind were in the corner of the room where Ayesha was.

Finally to his relief he saw Prentice and Walker start away. He almost rudely broke from conversation with Miss Frazier and pushed through the crowd toward Ayesha. Before he could reach her Professor Sturdy had engaged her attention, and Carver turned aside to the tea-table and pretended to be very much absorbed in the matter of pro-

visions, keeping a gloomy eye on his new rival. Something diverted his attention for the moment and when he looked toward Ayesha again Professor Sturdy had gone, but another man was talking to her.

Carver fidgeted from one place to another, greeting friends with a forced smile, desiring above all things in earth or heaven to be by Ayesha's side — but unable to make up his mind to go there while others were around.

At last the hour came for departure, and Carver was on tenterhooks. His embarrassment, his preoccupation, he thought must be visible to all. He hung about the doorway, however, determined not to go until he had seen Ayesha. Suddenly, before he knew how, she was at his side, on her way out into the hall, and he managed to gasp, "Good afternoon," and held out his hand.

"Why, how do you do?" said Ayesha, with a cheery smile. "Where have you been all the afternoon?" Had she not seen him?

"Oh, I've been around here."

"And you would not come to speak to me."

"You were so busy having a good time that I did not want to interrupt you." Now

or never. "Ayesha, would you like to join an excursion to Polish Farms next week? Miss Frazier and Miss Stone are going and a couple of fellows from Hissar."


"Yes, I heard Miss Frazier talking about it. It would be nice, wouldn't it?— But I can't tell now. I'll let you know by Wednesday."

Carver had barely time to run for the last boat. "Good-by, then! I hope you will go."

"Good-by," she said, and gave him her hand and her smile — and his hopes beat high as he ran to the boat. He had seen her give her rose in joking mood to Prentice, but she had given him something still more precious — hope!

CHAPTER VI

THE POLISH FARMS

HE day of the picnic dawned at last. Ayesha had accepted! In Carver's mind this seemed a proof of her love — at least he felt more exuberant, and more fearsome than he had ever felt before. To the last minute he could not believe that she was really going. Some inadvertence would surely happen to prevent him from this happiness!

The Robert College teachers rowed across to Anatoli Hissar in order to take there the little steamer on which they were to meet the Scutari party. It was twenty minutes late — twenty hours, it seemed to Carver. When at last it came in sight and made up slowly to the scala Carver saw a group of ladies in the boat waving to him and to the others — but his heart sank when he failed to see Ayesha. As soon as the gangway was let down he rushed aboard to greet the

Scutari party,—his eyes roving about the deck for the one person whom he missed.

He did not dare ask, "Is Ayesha here?" And he had already concluded with a gloomy heart that his forebodings had turned out true, when a voice behind him, silver sweet, called out, "And haven't you a 'Good morning' for me too, Monsieur Carver?"

Suddenly the clouds parted and showed, not a rift of blue only, but a whole blue sunny sky, gloriously spreading sunshine on all of Carver's world. She was there, after all! The fate of empires and the destiny of solar systems seemed very small just then compared with that one fact,—that Ayesha was there; because if she had not been there, the whole universe would have become instantly void, barren, and lifeless — as indeed it was already doing before he had heard Ayesha's voice.

He did not sit beside her during the half hour's sail to Tchiboukli. No, he could not bring himself to that. A great shyness overcame him — and similarly seemed to overcome Ayesha, who turned after her first greeting and devoted all of her attention to the other members of the party. Nor did

Carver walk beside her when they disembarked at Tchiboukli and began the long ascent to the forest road that wound its hillside way to Polish Farms.

It was a glorious spring day, the dazzling sunshine gilding grass and flowers to a supernatural beauty. The path hillward led by gorse and yellow broom. These filled the air with a soft, rich perfume peculiar to warm countries. Butterflies flitted from flower to flower. The birds carolled their best while the morning dew still sparkled gem-like on leaves and heather.

Several times the party stopped to rest and to cool off, for the climb was steady, and the sun beat down hot on their unshaded path. At last the top was reached, and they all sat down under the shade of a huge chestnut while the men fetched water for the ladies from a cool, sparkling spring. The Bosphorus shone blue and dreamily below them and the opposite terraces were already misty with heat-haze.

After a short rest they continued their way,—now much easier, for it lay along a fine macadamized road built by the Khedive of Egypt, the finest and only modern road

in all Turkey. It followed a sort of ridge from which at times a wide and beautiful expanse of country could be seen, hills forest-clad, smiling meadows green with spring, valleys that led the curious eye to unknown depths.

It is this mystery of Constantinople landscape which makes it so entrancing. A thousand little valleys divide the hillsides of the Bosphorus, tempting the foreigner to explore their hidden ways. Many of them have even yet been trodden but little by foot of man. Only one accurate map — made by a German firm — exists of this region; and even that, in spite of German thoroughness, the youthful and adventurous teachers of Robert College, in their frequent tramps, were able to add to and correct. One always had a feeling of mystery as one followed these valleys,—tracing a sparkling brook to its source on some barren hillside; emerging triumphant from a tangle of trees, brush, and heather to some new and superb view of the Bosphorus; or suddenly discovering a Turkish farm nestling in a bend of the valley — whose dogs furiously debarred approach until called off by their masters. A wild country, un-

spoiled by factory whistles or by railroads; a region still inviolate to Nature, to the spirit of Pan and of dryads, undisturbed by the gross unbelief of modern factory-bred minds.

Again the road dipped into the forest — shutting out the view, but cool and refreshing after exposure to the sun. Soon after noon they came out from the woods into a beautiful level meadow surrounded on all sides by trees, a little valley occupied by a few French farms. This was where they were to eat their luncheon. Baskets and knapsacks were dropped; and reclining in the thick flower-strewed grass the party avidly attacked the sandwiches, hard boiled eggs, sardines, and oranges which were to support but not destroy the appetite for a fine supper at the Polish Farms. Somehow Carver could not eat very heartily. He sat beside Miss Frazier and dreamed between mouthfuls. At times he looked over timidly to Ayesha, who sat opposite. She, too, seemed dreamy and pre-occupied. Little was said during the lunch hour. After the repast Miss Frazier insisted on a nap, and the other girls also lay resting in the shade; while the fellows climbed a cherry tree near by and ravaged it of the

meager remnants left by the owner on its branches.

At two o'clock they were on their way again. Carver had exchanged hardly ten words with Ayesha the whole morning. He now found himself suddenly beside her. How he got there he could not tell. They walked together awhile in silence. The others were a little ahead.

"Ayesha!" said Carver suddenly, "Won't you reconsider that letter of yours? Say it was not final?"

She smiled at him but said nothing.

"Won't you let me hope?"

"Perhaps!" She half whispered. It was not the same Ayesha who had spoken so eloquently at commencement; who had discoursed vehemently to him on the problems of her people; who had flirted with Prentice and Walker at the last Scutari reception. This was a different person — shy, feminine, shrinking from a happiness which seemed mutual.

"Are you sure you won't forget me when you go back home this summer?" she added, timidly. "You like me now, but you will make many friends in America — then you

will forget Ayesha. Far from the eyes is far from the heart."

"Never!" he cried. "I would never forget you! I have never seen any one so beautiful. But how did you know I was going home?"

"You told me so yourself — don't you remember?"

The fact that Ayesha remembered this detail — that she had already considered his departure — gave a clue to Carver and made him very happy. He had been in her thoughts, then. She knew his plans and remembered them. Ah! but she did not yet know all his plans!

"Then I may hope?"

"Perhaps"—and Ayesha's smile meant to him more than her words. Carver wanted to take her hand, but could not. He felt constrained. Her purity, her gentleness repressed in him the ardor which would naturally have led to such expression. They walked on side by side, silent, each rapt in dreams, in the visions which lift youth and innocence near to paradise.

They reached the Polish Farms just before dusk, and ate supper by candle light in the garden of Madame Gartner's simple inn.

A bottle of wine was broached in honor of the occasion, and anecdotes, laughter, and jollity furnished additional sauce to the appetites already engendered by hearty exercise. Carver was in a radiant mood. He forgot himself — a rare thing for him — and kept the company in constant laughter by his jokes and witticisms. Now and then he felt Ayesha's dark eyes upon him. She said little, ate little, but seemed happy.

Even the beauty of that spring evening — under a star-clustered sky — could not tempt our party long from sleep, for all were tired. The men slept in one room, two in one large bed and one on a couch laid along the wall. Carver undressed, joining in the pranks and merriment which necessarily must accompany the dishabillement of three fellows on such an occasion. He chatted and joked, cut up antics, and joined in the peals of laughter bursting forth from men in blithe holiday spirits. Finally a rap on the wall, indicating that the ladies wished to sleep, put an end to that fun; and after a few more explosions of laughter all became still and sleep gained its sweet ascendancy over tired limbs.

Not so with Carver, however. He tossed about — lying now on this side, now on that — in a delirium of happiness. Could one so near to paradise fall asleep? Could a brain on fire forget that a celestial houri had smiled upon him and that the future promised infinitely?

Oh, Sadi! then would thy poem of the moth and candle have appeared appropriate. A candle consuming its very essence in the flame of love — such was Carver. The hours passed, waking dreams of splendor swept across his vision, and not till the first pale light of dawn put to flight the ineffectual stars did he forget and fall asleep.

A pillow neatly landed on his nose reminded Carver that it was time to rise. The others were half dressed and through the open window came the song of birds and the brightness of a glorious morning.

Soon they were all out in the garden, ready for breakfast. As it was late they started on their coffee without waiting for the ladies. Presently Miss Frazier and Miss Stone appeared and later Miss McPherson, who had shared Ayesha's room. Carver greeted them with an expectant happiness, thinking

soon to see Ayesha appear with the glory of the morning on her face.

Breakfast was over and yet no Ayesha. She was going to have coffee in her room, said Miss McPherson. She would join them at dinner.

Carver was relieved. She was not ill, then, and she would be with them at dinner. He could wait. The bubbling joy within him was a spring whose effervescence would not subside because of this slight deprivation.

They started for a stroll and Carver walked with Miss McPherson. They did not go far, just down the hill to a deep glade where some one had built seats around a beech tree; a lovers' nook it seemed, ideal in every respect save of one absence. Miss McPherson, picking a daisy to pieces, looked at him significantly. "Ayesha did not sleep well last night," she said. "I had to entertain her with stories till long past midnight."

Carver tried to look noncommittal. "That's too bad," he said. But within, his heart sang.

Strange selfishness of love! He was not at all sorry that Ayesha could not sleep. Had it been Miss McPherson, now, who had

suffered from insomnia, he would have been sorry — would have been genuinely sympathetic. But when in his mind he pictured Ayesha tossing about upon a sleepless bed — as he had done — he could not wish it had been otherwise. Indeed, he would have been sorry if she had slept soundly.

In a dazed excitement he shared mechanically the conversation of the party — but his feet itched for the homeward way. When at last they returned for dinner, Ayesha was there at a table looking over a curious old roster of the inn full of signatures of ancient guests, some of whom had jotted a poem in praise of the inn or contributed a clever sketch.

“Why don’t you write something?” said Ayesha, smiling to Carver as he bashfully joined her. She seemed subdued but happy, and prattled of her girlhood days and of her love for Nature. The rest of the company left them. It was an idyllic hour for Carver. He was thoroughly happy just to bask in the sunshine of her presence; and that gentle voice by his side, regardless of the meaning of the words, thrilled him as no music ever did.

Dinner was finally announced, and they sat down to a hearty repast. A duck which had but lately waddled and quacked its idle life before them, gave forth an incense of crisp roasted fat as it was laid upon the table. Sweet potatoes and rice, apple sauce, corn bread and pie completed the repast — and for fruit they had but to reach up and pluck delicious cherries from the branches overhead.

A walk to the woods was proposed for the afternoon. A mile within the forest they came to a group of old beeches, gleaming silver-white against the brown-leaved soil. Here they nestled down and began to tell stories and play games. Thus the afternoon restfully passed by; and a simple but delicious supper, with an "early to bed," sent them to sleep with eager anticipations of the morrow.

Monday dawned fair and bright as was to be expected of a Constantinople spring; and not without regret, after a hearty breakfast, they bade farewell to this quaint hamlet — a bit of Poland delightfully misplaced in Turkey.

On the homeward trip Carver stuck man-

fully by Ayesha. Nor bashfulness nor the pranks of his companions could separate him from this happiness. Once Prentice meanly slipped into his place as Carver stooped to pick a flower. Carver followed in their trail until an opportunity presented itself for ousting Prentice. Prentice laughed and twitted him for this — but no derision could today keep him from Ayesha's side.

So the way was retraversed, the pace more and more moderating as the sun reached its zenith and empty stomachs joined in signalling the dinner hour. Their objective point for luncheon was a huge tree, at the foot of which was a spring famous in that locality for its excellent water. Carver led the way as he was most familiar with the route, a slightly different one from that by which they had come.

To his chagrin he found himself upon a false trail. He pushed ahead at a faster pace to try and find the right path. Finally he hit the trail again and rushed back to re-direct the party. Ayesha was not in sight and Carver continued to retrace his steps until he met her, walking somewhat wearily by the side of Glover. The latter, not so

much of a tease as Prentice, immediately yielded his place and ran on ahead.

"Are you tired, Ayesha?"

"No," she said smiling; but her face belied her.

"You are, I know. I'm so sorry. Won't you take my arm over this rough place?"

Ayesha did, in fact, consent to take his arm until a stony and uneven stretch was passed. It seemed to Carver that the world had been made just for this, that Ayesha should be walking beside him supported by his arm — and when she withdrew it upon reaching the smooth road again he wished that all the rocks in the universe were piled up before them, that he might help her through.

When they reached the spring they found the rest of the party all seated and luncheon being served. Carver for the first time on the trip sat beside Ayesha, and helped her to chicken, to sandwiches, and to fruit — which she ate with a good appetite. Although naturally egoistic and inclined to be selfish, the glow of love so warmed his heart that had none of the luncheon fallen to his share he would have been perfectly happy. He

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passed the food around, waited attentively on others, and forgot himself in a true spirit of service.

All beings crave happiness. To most people pleasure seems to lie in getting, in acquiring, or in satisfying some passing desire; to the happy lover, however, whose cup of joy is already filled to overflowing, the greatest pleasure lies in thoughtfulness for others — in bestowing generously, out of the exuberance of his heart, love and kindness to all around him. Such was Carver's mood today. He had a pleasant word and a cheery smile for every one. He dropped his egoism and escaped so completely from the prison of self that he felt lost in the great Oneness, a part of all the joyousness of life about him, a brother of the birds and trees, a living, breathing unit of the cosmic whole.

The hour's walk to the Bosphorus passed all too soon. Carver and Ayesha conversed on the beauty of the summer afternoon, on the joy of exercise, of tramping in the heart of Nature; but the great central theme in both their minds did not come to their lips. Only their smiles as they looked in each other's eyes seemed to hint mysteriously,

"We know! There is no need of speaking."

How poor, how restricted are words in the presence of love! One may say, "I love you"—and yet not mean it; and one may simply look and smile and be assured. If the eyes are the windows of the soul, revealing in their depths translucent glories of the indweller there,—then the lips, so mobile, so expressive of emotion, are surely love's heralds, announcing, though not a word is spoken, the gentle power sweeping its way from heart to face.

So two lovers may say as these two did, "Isn't it a beautiful sunset!"—and then look, not at the sunset, but in each other's eyes and smile until they could bear the mutual gaze no more.

At the scala Carver said farewell as he helped Ayesha to the gangway. One last brilliant smile and she was gone. The men then engaged a *kayik* and rowed across to Hissar. Carver said not a word—nor did his companions care to tease him. The afternoon glow upon the Bosphorus was too beautiful to spoil with words. They reached the little market quay, paid the boatman and began the ascent to the college.

When they reached it there was still a glow of sunshine in the air — some twenty minutes lacking sunset. Carver left the others at the door and went out to stroll alone upon the terrace. All the world was singing. What was this transcendent light that glowed on tree and flower and on the flowing Bosphorus? Was it merely sunshine? Ah! there was more! For to the beauty of a summer's afternoon was added the elixir of joy and youth. And he who gazes through love-intoxicated eyes finds a supernatural glory over land and sea.

CHAPTER VII

THE OBSTACLE



JUNE had come and another commencement day was approaching. Soon the school year would be over and the teachers of the two American colleges would be returning to America or going to different parts of Europe for their summer vacations. In the former class belonged Carver. Soon he would be leaving Constantinople, perhaps forever. The Saturday before commencement found him on his way to Scutari to see Ayesha. Nothing definite had yet been said between them. Passionate, poetic letters from Carver had brought sweet but modest answers — in a gentle handwriting which already had become so dear to Carver that when he saw that script among the pile of college mail he never failed to tremble slightly from excitement. He had seen Ayesha once or

twice at college functions, but never alone. He had been content to let it rest so, until this meeting which had been planned some weeks ahead.

Fortunately for Carver's plans it was a pleasant day. Instead of taking the steamer he enjoyed a *kayik* to Candilli and walked up from there. He had a small volume of Persian poetry with him which he intended to read to Ayesha. Half way up the hill he sat down by the roadside, under a tree, and while resting read a little in his book. He opened to the introduction and happened upon a beautiful passage which described the Sufi teaching as to love.

As he meditated over this, gazing down dreamily at the Bosphorus and the sunlit terraces beneath him, a new meaning seemed to be in Nature. It became a window through which he saw God — a vista down the road to paradise. He knew that Love, even such a love as burned within him, had created all the worlds of being and sustains them by its breath. A dizziness almost overcame him and he needed no intoxication of Dervish rite or drug to feel that "Halet" which is the goal of every mystic.

Then he turned the leaves and read that exquisite passage from Jami:

No heart is that which love ne'er wounded; they
Who know not lovers' pangs are soulless clay.
Turn from the world, O turn thy wandering feet;
Come to the world of love and find it sweet.

How joyous, how grateful to the Divine Power that had planned all this, was Carver that on this occasion he could bask, as it were, both in the human and divine love. He knew his weakness. He realized that his heart, if lonely, could not have seen this vision. It was because his soul was full of human love that he could be so near divine; it was because a thread of human love joined him to a living, breathing being, it was because the concretion of feminine loveliness was awaiting him, that he could wander safely in this maze of Union.

What though a hundred arts to thee be known;
Freedom from self is gained through love alone.
To worldly love thy youthful thoughts incline,
For earthly love will lead to love divine.

Was there ever, Carver thought, a more joyous path to God than this the Sufis taught?

Once to his master a disciple cried:

"To wisdom's pleasant path be thou my guide."

"Hast thou ne'er loved?" the master answered; "learn The ways of love and then to me return."

Ah, he did not need to crave again for love—the weary search was ended. Was he, as the poet said, “leaving the way of wisdom for a while”? Yet such a detour was a smiling fault, if fault it be,—and fresh and radiant led him by love’s path to strange adventures.

After a while he left his dreams and continued his way to the college. Ayesha was already waiting for him at the tea table, and after a hasty cup of tea they started on their walk. Ayesha suggested an old Turkish cemetery on a hillside overlooking the Bosphorus. There, under the shadow of a cypress tree, they reclined and looked out over the water. No one was in sight and they had this magic world all to themselves.

“May I read you some of these Persian poems?” Carver asked.

Ayesha nodded. “Do! I love them.”

Carver read some of the most beautiful of them, looking up from time to time to get fresh inspiration from her face. Ayesha was stretched out comfortably on the grass, her head supported on her graceful hands.

After reading awhile Carver began to dis-

cuss with her the Sufi teaching and the meaning of love. She was not so shy as when he last had seen her, but seemed again the frank, companionable Ayesha.

Finally Carver left the abstract and became concrete. "Ayesha," he said, "I am going to America to prepare a home. Will you share it with me?"

He took one of her hands in his and gently kissed it. Ayesha looked up at him sadly and retook her hand. "No, I cannot!" she said.

Carver was surprised. "Why not? I will try to make it a happy home, Ayesha — and my people will be proud of you. Don't you love me?"

"Not enough to leave my country," said Ayesha frankly. Then earnestly taking his hand in hers, "Don't you see, Roland, I cannot leave my poor country, which needs our services so much. The whole purpose of my education was to fit me to help my people. I cannot give up that aim, which has been so dear to me, for the sake of personal happiness,—for I think we could be happy together, Roland."

"But can't you serve Turkey in America

as well as here? You are a fine speaker. You could give lectures on Turkey and help the Americans to understand your people. You would be a great success—dressed in Turkish costume—I know it. You lecture and I write. Oh, Ayesha! That would be ideal. That is what I have been dreaming of.”

Ayesha smiled sadly.

“No—I could not do it! I am needed more here. Nothing could tempt me from my country now, when things are changing so fast and so much is to be done. Just think how hard it has been for anyone to help our poor tyrant-ridden country. But now it is free and growing, oh, so fast! I want to help make it a progressive, educated country.”

She paused a moment, still holding his hand with a sympathetic pressure. “I will tell you something which you must not tell anyone. The Minister of Education has just asked me to help reorganize the primary schools in Turkey.” She put her finger to her pretty lips. “Hush! Not a word of this to anyone, will you? It’s a great secret. But you see why I cannot go with you, don’t you, dear?”

Was the Minister of Education interested

in her in any other than a professional way? A pang of jealousy disturbed Carver's hopes. If he went to America he would leave behind him he knew not what rivals. He thought for a moment and then his face brightened.

"Well, then," he said, "I will stay here, Ayesha; if you do not love me enough to leave your country for me, I do love you enough to leave my country for you. Besides, I love Turkey, and would love to work here at your side, if I could find anything to do. Now it is all solved, isn't it?" and he kissed her jubilantly,— this time, on the lips.

"Don't!" she cried, terrified. "Roland, there is an obstacle to this, too!" and she looked at him sadly. "Don't you know?" Her dark eyes looked seriously, searchingly in his.

"No."

"You do not remember the strict rules of our religion? A Mohammedan man may marry a Christian woman, but—" she paused.

Carver's face turned white. "But a Christian man cannot marry a Mohammedan woman?"

"No. They would be stoned to death if they were found."

"But in the new Turkey, the free, new Turkey —"

"Religious customs do not change overnight. It is just as impossible now as a year ago."

"But isn't there anything we could do?"

Ayesha hesitated.

"I know there is! You have something in your mind —" seizing her hands and looking eagerly in her face.

She did not answer.

"Tell me, Ayesha."

"It's nothing!"

"Then why did you hesitate? If you have any consideration for me, tell me."

"Nothing could make such a marriage possible, unless —"

"Unless what?"

"Unless the Christian man became Mohammedan," she whispered, looking down.

There was silence for a while.

"Could he then marry?"

"Yes," she murmured, looking in his eyes and seeing the doubt there. "But you do not love me enough to do that! You could not give up your religion, Roland, and I would not ask you to. For religion, if it is

sincere, is even nearer and dearer to one than country, or than love. That is why I said, there is no way out."

Nothing more was said. They sat for some minutes looking over the Bosphorus to the Queen of cities, golden in its sunset glow. Tears were forming in Carver's eyes and he turned away so as not to be seen, and releasing his hands from Ayesha jumped up. "I suppose we ought to be going," he said.

They took the homeward path and as they walked along Carver fed his soul upon her face. If he returned to America it might be the last time he would see her. When they reached the gate he stopped, and as he held her hand to say good-by, "Give me time to think, Ayesha. Will you promise that?" he said.

"Yes, Roland," and, as he turned to go, "Evallah," she called, in her sweet Turkish voice. "Evallah"—(*God be with you*). The beauty of this Turkish word of parting lingered in his mind as he walked pensively away.

After all, her God was the same as his. Should the mere fact that what in French

was called *Dieu* and in ancient Hebrew *Jehovah*, was in Arabic called *Allah* — should that fact separate two lives? But to change — to renounce his Christianity for the sake of earthly love — would that not be a great sin?

With such thoughts passed the hour's trip from Scutari; with such thoughts were filled the days remaining of the term. Outwardly the usual school work went on; inwardly, a revolution was taking place in Carver's soul, a battle between two forces — that of love, and of religion.

CHAPTER VIII

IN THE ROUMANIAN ALPS



It was July in the mountains, yet the cool fragrance of the air and the delightful feeling of exhilaration that it gave seemed rather to belong to an October day than to summer. After the heat and enervation of a Constantinople spring, Carver found great relief in this fresh, bracing climate. He loved to stroll of an afternoon along some forest path with book in hand; and upon reaching a smiling mountain meadow, to sit on its edge under the shade of pines, reading and dreaming intermittently. His dreams were happy — because he soon expected Ayesha.

Strange prank of destiny — that Carver should be here in this little Roumanian mountain village, instead of in America as he had intended. When he last saw Ayesha and she told him she would not leave her native country, it came as a great blow to

him and upset all his plans. He had already resigned his position at Robert College and it seemed impossible now to be reinstated, because a new teacher had already been engaged to take his place. Yet to leave Ayesha, to place between them seven thousand miles of land and sea, seemed equally impossible.

Day by day this problem weighed upon him. At times he was on the point of going to the president, stating his case, and asking for any position, at any price, which would enable him to stay,—but he was ashamed to do this. So he saw the day of his departure drawing nearer and nearer. His sleep became disturbed, and he awoke each morning unrested, with worry so staring him in the face that he did not heed the glorious sunshine pouring in his windows. When he took walks or trips with his friends he responded absently to their conversation and found it all he could do to keep his gloom from being openly apparent.

It had now come to within one day of the closing of college. Carver took a long walk and communed with himself. A voice within him told him to stay. He came back to

the college glowing with the firm resolve to stay at any cost. How soon and how miraculously his resolution was to find a way! As he went into the dining-room, a little late for afternoon tea, he found Prentice finishing his cup alone. Something made him ask, "Prentice, do you want to go back to America?" for he had heard him wish often that his term was up.

"Do you want to stay?" asked Prentice.

"Yes."

"And I want to go. Why can't we fix it up?"

And in ten minutes they had arranged a plan. Prentice went that evening to the president and asked permission to resign, with the provision that Carver stay in his place. Prentice came back smiling, reported favorably to Carver and began to pack his trunks. Carver, upon hearing the news, looked about lovingly at his study — the home for two past years of his thoughts and dreams — greeting with joy each picture on the walls, the sedia suggestive of many leisure hours, and the books that smiled on him from their shelves. Then he undressed and went to bed, sleeping peacefully for the first time in weeks.

The next morning he arose bubbling with joy. Never had sunshine seemed so glorious. He strolled up the hill behind the college, and rejoiced at the blue dancing Bosphorus which he was not going to leave, after all. As he sat under a cypress tree in the little old Mohammedan cemetery, a brilliant idea came to him. He had heard Ayesha speak of Ploşna,* a village high up in the Roumanian Alps where she intended spending the summer. She had described its charms, and had he not already made plans for his homeward trip he would have been tempted to ask her if he could not spend the summer there with her. Now that he had changed his plans he determined to go to Ploşna without saying anything to Ayesha about it, and surprise her when she came there in the middle of July; for if he told her she might object to what — in Oriental eyes — would entirely compromise her were it known. Thus he could be with her more intimately than he had ever dared to hope — could share with her daily the beauties of Nature, the glory of the mountain scenery, the joy of comradeship and communion of thought.

* Pronounced *Ploşna*.

The idea of it almost took his breath away, — but if he were going to dare aspire, why not dare all things, and fight like a man for that prize which seemed to him to be the greatest life had to offer!

Through his friend, Miss Frazier, he found out just where Ploşna was, and where Ayesha was going to board. He then wrote there asking for accommodations, and not waiting for a reply, packed and started out, trusting in his usual luck to find a place there or near by.

After a hot day's journey through the Roumanian plains — which are an extension of the great Hungarian plain — the train began to climb the steep ascent of the mountain pass. A cool, fresh air penetrated the compartment. Through the open windows he could catch the noise of running waters — a brook that leaped its way down the mountain side. Charming villages came to view — each one more ideal than the last — until finally, at sundown, he reached the little station of Ploşna; and, giving his baggage to a boy, allowed himself to be guided to the Pension Ploşna, where Frau Wirthin greeted him with a smiling welcome. Yes, she had a place for him, not in her own house,

but in a farmhouse near by — and he could eat with her guests.

After his supper — eaten at a table in the open air, with the mountains in their sunset glory as a background — Carver went to his room to unpack. Not seeing his bed made he returned to Frau Wirthin to find out the cause.

“Did you bring any bedding?” she asked.

“Why, no! Is that the custom?”

“Yes, all my guests bring their own bedding. But I will see what I can do for you.”

She managed to scrape together a pillow, two sheets, and a blanket. Visions of uncomfortable nights filled Carver’s mind with apprehension. One blanket would hardly keep off the mountain cold. Just then a German lady, a school teacher from Bucharest, came up upon hearing the conversation and kindly offered to contribute her steamer rug. Another lady contributed a quilt, and so Carver found himself amply provided.

Before retiring he could not resist, though tired, a desire to walk a bit up the road that passed his cottage. It was a cool, bracing night. The stars danced glitteringly in the

sky, as stars can only dance in mountain atmosphere. High upon the left the wall of mountain peaks frowned down upon fir forests at their feet, sombre, calm, majestic. It was a scene which Carver never forgot. Often in after days he would shut his eyes and retrace his steps upon this mountain road.

A wonderful sleep followed this walk; and in the morning the sun, peeping in at his window, woke him up with little thrills of delightful anticipation. Rushing to the window he threw open the latticed sashes and leaned out, breathing deep of the fresh morning air — joyous almost to ecstasy at the sunlight sparkling on the grass and filling with mist the northern slopes of the mountains. He dressed quickly and walked up the mountain path before breakfast, exploring eagerly for nooks and corners where he could bring his books and read. Not far from the village the path opened out into a forest clearing, surrounded by a wall of dark pines and firs — an ideal spot in which to sit and dream. Resolving to come here often he returned light-hearted to the pension and ate with appetite his breakfast of black

bread, fresh mountain butter, honey, and coffee.

Fräulein Herder, who had lent him the steamer rug, was also at breakfast. She knew a little English and Carver knew a little German, so they were soon well acquainted. She offered to show him the beauties of the immediate vicinity; but Carver, making some excuse, slipped away by himself to his newly discovered glade, taking with him a book and some letters of Ayesha's.

Ensconcing himself between the roots of a gigantic pine, he leaned back in reverie. He wanted to be alone, so that he could think of Ayesha, could dream of her, could be with her in spirit, if not in person.

His dreams were not all pleasant, for a conflict was going on within him,—a conflict which had begun the last time he had seen Ayesha and which the passing days accentuated rather than relieved. His joy therefore at looking forward to seeing Ayesha was not wholly unmingled with anxiety; for to the problem, the dilemma which she had presented to him, he could find no solution. She would not leave her country; he could not marry her without becoming

a Mohammedan. The latter course he could not bring himself to face — yet equally futile was the thought of leaving Turkey and Ayesha. Hence, this July day found him in Ploşna waiting for Ayesha — hovering like the memorial moth about the candle of his desire, whose flame allured him restlessly.

He had thought over, again and again, the idea of turning Mussulman — but only to reject it as impossible. Even though his sympathies were strong for this virile Oriental faith, he could not feel that it was right to turn from Christianity and adopt a less lofty religion from the sole motive of love. It seemed, in a way, like bartering one's soul for the sake of passion,— not so despicable, yet not much better than changing one's religion for the sake of business, as some few Mohammedans were known to do in Egypt.

Carver, though timorous, was of the stuff that martyrs are made of. A peculiar combination of tolerance and intensity in his nature made it possible for him to admit all the virtues of the Mohammedan religion, yet shut him off from actual initiation into

its fold. He was perfectly willing that Ayesha should remain a Mohammedan; had he been born one he would be content at this moment to remain Mohammedan himself; but he could not feel justified in swapping religions, so to speak, not for conviction's sake, but for the gratification of desire.

Love to Carver had always seemed a sacred thing. Yet he felt deep down in his soul that ideals of religion should be more sacred still; and that when it came to a conflict between love for woman and love for God, it would be impossible for him to give up the latter though it might be difficult for him also to renounce the former.

That he found it indeed difficult to renounce love — the most wonderful, alluring and ecstatic love that had ever come into his life — his presence here in Ploşna bore witness to. In fact, he found it impossible to tear himself away from Ayesha,—and so he lingered in this mountain hamlet, playing with Destiny, staking his chances on some strange and unexpected turning of her wheel.

If he could not marry Ayesha, nothing forbade him from loving her, from worshipping her, from even basking in the glory of her

presence, — for she was soon expected. So the days passed by, with mountain tramps and hours of dreaming and nights of balmy sleep; and constantly Carver looked forward to Ayesha's arrival, and constantly he dared not ask just when she was to come.

It was already August, and Ayesha had not come. Carver was getting anxious. Yet not a word did he dare breathe — nor make an inquiry as to the cause of her delay — so bashful was his love. One day, as some of the guests were breakfasting, Fräulein Herder remarked casually to Frau Weber —

“That Turkish girl is not coming, I hear.”

“What Turkish girl?”

“I forget her name, Alesha — no, Ayesha, I think. She is quite prominent in Constantinople. She was to come here for the summer, you know. But they say she is betrothed to the Turkish Minister of Education, and they will be married soon.”

Carver's face became flushed. It could not but show embarrassment, he thought. He was glad only a few were at the table. He buried himself in the big cup of coffee for a moment and then jumped from the table and walked off — up the mountain,

down the valley — anywhere to get away, to be by himself, to recover his poise and think things out. He found a spot nestled between high rocks, threw himself down on the pine needles, and lay more stunned than he had ever been before — save when as a child he had fallen from a high veranda and had been carried to his room unconscious.

This, then, was Destiny's turn of the wheel! One turn of it had settled his dilemma, had removed his uncertainty, by sweeping from the table in a second all the gold of life that had so late enticed his heart and soul.

CHAPTER IX

HELENE



CARVER was at first very bitter in his feelings toward Ayesha. She had virtually promised to be his, if love could find a way. Now she had betrayed his love and had proved faithless. He would not want to be married to her if that were her real character — the fickleness of an Oriental breaking through the veneer of Americanism which had so become her. He hated her for this strange act — he cast her from his thoughts, or tried to. But that was impossible. Ayesha's face had made too deep an impression upon his memory, as her personality and charm had upon his heart, for him to forget her simply because she had forgotten him.

But had she, in fact, forgotten him? Perhaps she was forced into this engagement. Carver remembered vaguely hearing that her relatives were becoming too suspiciously

aware of her friendship for an American young man. Was it not possible that they had brought pressure to bear upon Ayesha — who after all was Turkish and though independent would feel a duty to her family — and had hastily patched up an engagement with one of her own race, in order to keep her out of danger?

Carver preferred to think this. It was less a blow to his pride. He could not believe that those eyes which had looked into his so lovingly were the eyes of a deceiver — or that she could so soon forget a love as deep as theirs had seemed to be. Yes, it was better to think of her as a victim to the force of circumstance — one with whom environment prevailed over the factors of education, of freedom, and of love.

These were heavy days for Carver. He kept by himself a great deal, walking upon the mountain-side, reading, brooding over the past while trying to forget it. An agreeable diversion offered itself in an opportunity to join a party of summer boarders who were making a three days' tour of the mountains on horseback. They needed a man to make the excursion possible, and Carver

was glad to join them in the hope of forgetting his troubles.

Early on Monday morning they started from the pension before the stars had paled — six ladies, two Roumanian peasants to see to the horses, and Carver. A morning's climb brought them to the top of Virful cu Dor, the peak which so grimly overshadowed the little town of Ploşna. There they ate luncheon and rested, looking down on the beautiful scenery beneath them.

A long five hours' trip brought them by evening to the summit of Omul, the highest mountain of that district and the end of one chain of the Carpathians which dominated the plains of Hungary at its feet.

They were hungry and tired. The Roumanian drivers quickly had a fire going in the mountain shelter where they were to pass the night, and proceeded to cook their national dish, a sort of corn meal mush boiled to a consistency such that it could be cut into slices and eaten in the hand. This with the native cheese proved more tempting to Carver than the sandwiches, eggs, and cake with which they were plentifully provided. It was hot and savory, and tasted good.

They walked out a bit after supper, and could see the lights of Tomos, a city just over the boundary between Roumania and Hungary. Above them were the stars of a majestic summer sky; did they, too, as the lights below, suggest habitation, life, and people? One does not feel, on mountain peaks, the complacency of those who walk in city streets whose artificial lights make dim the stars. Up here the earth seems very small, no longer the center and focus of existence — but more truly, as the Oriental shepherd said, the footstool of God whose throne is in the heavens.

With these thoughts, Carver turned in and went to sleep.

The second day's trip carried them over mountain plateaus and through picturesque passes, where mountain sheep grazed in huge flocks. They lunched at an old monastery built within a cave, whose huge proportions had sheltered human life for many hundred years. Before the fire was a gray-bearded monk stirring corn meal in a pot.

"He speaks English," said one of the guides.

"You know English?" asked Carver of him.

"Sure!" was the ready response.

"You've been in America?" said Carver, divining the adverb.

"Sure!"

"Whereabouts?"

"Paterson, New Jersey."

He told briefly how he had migrated to America and worked in a factory, until a strike threw him out of work and he came back to Roumania to turn monk and lead a lazy existence in this strange mountainous remoteness. Such is the kaleidoscopic quality of life — whose patterns change at the whim of Destiny, ever new and unforeseen.

From here on, the journey proved monotonous to Carver. He was tired and he found little to interest him in the companionship of his party. He had hoped to forget himself; yet, as Horace said of old, "black care can also mount horseback," — and gallop as he would, Carver did not succeed in outstripping his foe. He was in a morbid condition which the flaccidity, inaneness, and asexuality of the rest of the party only exaggerated. The inspiration which he was wont to find in woman's eyes failed him in these strange Swiss Germans — so shy, so

gauche, so reserving of their femininity that they might as well have been Trappists, as far as their conversation or their society lending charm to a weary mind was concerned.

Carver was greatly relieved when they finally reached Sinaia, dismissed their guides and horses, and took the train to Ploşna, arriving in time for a late supper. He slept soundly that night, at least one good result of his trip.

The next morning when Carver came to breakfast he saw a new face opposite him — of delicate contour, somewhat wistful and discontented, gray eyes looking friendlily into his. It was a new boarder, a Fräulein Ruppenthal from Bucharest. She seemed lonely; she spoke French, and Carver spoke French much better than he did German; she was pretty, refined, rather charming, as the Viennese run. It was inevitable that they should get acquainted, that they should take walks together, that they should find enjoyment in each other's company.

Soon they were perfect comrades. They sat together at meals; they strolled together along the mountain paths; they sat beneath ancient pines and read together in French

or German. Some days she would make him speak to her only in German; at other times they talked in French. Carver made greater progress in his German conversation in this month than in all the previous years. To speak with Helene was more inspiring than to repeat to himself words from a phrase book, as he had been doing.

Strange electricity of sex — like a lightning blast, the cause of so much disaster, yet a power that can be directed into channels of joy, growth, and achievement. How easy it is to do things for one we love! How quickly the mind responds under the inspiration of sex!

Once more life became joyous for Carver and he forgot to mourn. The void was filled, not so ecstatically, but measuredly and for the moment adequately enough to make the song of birds and the sparkle of mountain sunshine delicious to his senses. But a week before an Ishmael, a wanderer on the face of the earth, he was now at home again, at ease, in the world of life and joy and nature all about him — and all because two gray eyes looked from time to time inspiringly into his; because a gentle voice made music

to his ear; and a sympathizing hand pressed his as if to say that he was not alone. For of all things in earth or heaven, loneliness — not of body, but of soul — was the one thing he could not stand.

Several times they walked to Sinaia together over a mountain path that wound delightfully through pine forests. In the garden of the Café National they could rest and listen to a splendid orchestra as they sipped lemonade and studied the gay life about them; for Roumanians are gay, Sinaia is their summer capital, and the Café National is the center of Sinaia life.

Once on a church festival — the birthday of the Virgin — they walked over to the Royal Chapel at Sinaia to hear the service and to catch a glimpse of the king and queen. They were fortunate enough to secure a place very close to where the royal pair stood. Carver studied Carlo's face, dignified, kingly, idealistic — and the face of Carmen Sylva so motherly and sweet under its crown of white hair; no finer couple in the whole world, whether prince or peasant — no couple more devoted to service, to ideals, to humanity.

Another time Helene took Carver to visit the summer palace of the Princess Mary, who was away at the time. Helene through friends had secured a pass. They were shown all over this unique summer home of royalty — the most individual, artistic, and homelike palace which Carver had seen in all his travels. Instead of the monotony of the typical palace with its reception hall, its grande salle, its series of bedrooms with stuffy tapestries, stately beds, trite decorations and such lack of privacy that it would seem princes must disrobe in semi-public,— instead of all this Carver found himself in the beautiful hallway of a modern home, a curving staircase leading artistically to the floor above, where to his astonishment he found chambers unparalleled for their beauty in all the residences even of royalty.

Everything in the combined anti-chamber and study of the Princess, they were told, had been designed by herself. The furniture was hand-carved from patterns made by herself, in which the lily was the predominating motive; the decorations were all chosen personally; and on the walls and on easels about the room were several beautiful oil paintings

done by the Princess, who is an artist of no little talent.

But the thing that impressed him most was an alcove and small chapel built into the wall, whose decorations, draperies, and motto hand-carved in the oak panelling, all bespoke a sweet devoutness and piety.

The Princess' bedroom was no less attractive — the expression, it seemed, of a personality rich in culture, charm, and spirituality. It was not a bare room of state, but a room which seemed to admit one into the intimacies of its owner's soul — so personal, so expressive it was. Almost one felt an intrusion.

With such trips and excursions the month of August passed and on the first of September Helene regretfully — so she said, and Carver took it for true — left the Pension Ploşna and returned to Bucharest to take up her work again; but not before eliciting from Carver a promise to see her on his way through Bucharest a week later, when he too was to bid farewell to the beautiful mountains of dreams.

It was a dull week for Carver, after she was gone. Though the sky still shone blue

above and the grass still sparkled emerald green beneath its morning dew, it seemed to Carver that the joy and fragrance had departed from Nature.

Only a few days remained, however, before Carver himself left Ploşna to return to college. He had arranged with Helene to meet her in Bucharest as he passed through the Roumanian capital on his way to Constanza. He reached the Little Paris, for so Bucharest was often called, at noon and found Helene waiting for him at the station, happy and smiling. How pleasant was such an arrival, where a pretty face greeted him with welcome.

They took a carriage and drove to the Café Parisien, which combined the luxurious taste of Parisian cooking with the strange dishes of the East. After dinner Helene took him to the winter palace of Queen Carmen Sylva, which was open to visitors at this season. It was not as intimate and personal as the residence of the Princess Mary which he had visited in Sinaia, but Carver found it more beautiful, artistic, and original than most of the royal residences which he had seen.

For the evening a pleasant party had been arranged, to meet Fräulein Herder and Madame Therry — whom they had known at the Pension Ploşna — and take supper at the Café de l'Opéra, an open-air café where light opera was performed, a place much frequented by the fashionable of Bucharest.

They secured a table for four in the center of the café. Carver greatly enjoyed watching, as he ate, the people all about him, — studying their costumes, their manners, and the little dramas of real life which are so patent to observing eyes in all such places. At eight o'clock the opera commenced, the latest thing from Vienna. It was tuneful, charming, and permeated with the light sentiment of Viennese love. Carver sat beside Helene and enjoyed listening to this music of romance and of love.

As the closing scene was sung and the curtain fell, they rose with a sigh. Most of the people had gone when they reached the street and called for a carriage, which they had some difficulty in getting. The carriage reached at last Madame Therry's door. Helene started to get out.

"Why!" said Carver surprised — "Are you going to stay here?"

Helene looked at him with pale face and eyes that drooped with love.

"Yes," she half whispered.

"Oui, oui, Monsieur Carver — and you are going to stay, too. No excuses now, I insist upon it." The old lady beamed kindly upon him. "I love to make young people happy. What! you hesitate? How ridiculous of you — no joking now, Monsieur Americano! How foolish of you! Of course you knew you were to stop here. Come, help us out."

Little shivers ran down Carver's back. What was all this? Red flashes passed through clouds of mist in his inner consciousness. Something whispered within him, "Here is Opportunity; we are brought to its door. Let us go in at last." His pulse quickened — the blood pounded through his veins and hammered at his temples.

But an inner angel seemed to stay him — the angel of his past restraint. Then through the mist he saw a vision of a pure pale face, framed in hair of dark glory — a face lost to him, discarded violently from his storehouse of memory, but now reappearing.

Something snapped within his brain. The mist rolled away. One quick glance above at the fair, pure stars of night — then he jumped from the carriage and assisted the ladies gallantly out.

“Good-by, Helene” — he said, and took her hand tenderly in his, holding it for a moment. “Good-by.”

A sad, divining face looked into his. Her hand still lingered. She read his face — she read his mind — and she responded, her soul rising to meet his.

“Good-by, Roland!” she said, sadly — looked for one long moment into his eyes. “Good-by!” It was the last time they were ever to meet, and both knew it.

“What! Not going to stay?” cried Madame Therry in amazement.

Roland jumped back into the carriage. “*A la gare!*” (*To the railroad station*) he shouted to the cocher. As the horses started, he looked back and watched Helene going up the steps. Her shoulders were bent — yet she turned and waved to him and smiled bravely to him through her tears, if tears there were, as if to say again in her gentle voice, “Good-by, Roland!”

He waved, he kissed his hand to her, he followed her dainty form with his eyes until the distance swallowed it up.

Half an hour later he was on the midnight express bound for Constantinople. He felt safer now that he was leaving Lotus Land. He breathed a sigh of relief. His heart went out in deep, true love to Helene—whom he had succeeded in loving as a comrade, nothing more. All night he dreamed of Ploşna, of the beautiful mountains ranged about the village, of walks through pine forests with Helene—yet, strangely enough, it was not Helene! It was Ayesha who was with him in his dreams!

CHAPTER X

THE THRALLS



CARVER'S train reached Constanza at nine the next morning but the boat for Constantinople did not sail till two. He spent the morning walking about the semi-Oriental town and at noon found a delightful restaurant overlooking the sea, where he could get his lunch.

After a fair meal — of which a native fish formed the “plat de jour” — as he sat smoking and looking out over the charming bay whose blue waters danced mistily to the far horizon, his attention was attracted by scraps of conversation which he overheard from a couple at the next table. They had ordered their meal in French, but were now speaking English. As Carver had also spoken French to the waiter — unless he spoke English he was always taken for French or Russian — this couple, thinking they were alone as far as English was concerned, were quar-

relling slightly in quite audible tones. The talk, with its little undercurrent of complaint yet tenderness, seemed to prove them to be recently married — perhaps nearing the end of their honeymoon. She was bored and complained of his manners; he knew she was more cultured; in fact, that was why he married her — and he apologized, saying he was somewhat out of sorts.

Carver set him down for a business man, taking his bride with him on a trip which combined commerce with travel — both some tired and fretful, at that point in love where friction first begins. He enjoyed always sitting thus and analyzing people, of which he had now a somewhat cruel opportunity — their intimate conversation unawares adding clues to what he could discern from physiognomy.

At last he was obliged to start for the steamer. He wondered if they, too, were not to take the same trip — but he did not see them on the boat — and he passed the afternoon reading on deck and went to bed early.

The next morning he was up to see the sunrise and the entrance to the Bosphorus,

at that picturesque point where Jason so narrowly escaped the closing Cyclades. As he stood on the top deck, sighting land, he became aware of his unknown friends of the previous day standing near him. She was asking questions which her husband could ill answer, evidently not having passed through the Bosphorus before.

Carver, knowing all the sights of the Bosphorus with much of its history, offered some information which was eagerly accepted — and he soon found himself playing the part of guide. He pointed out the chief things of interest,—the Giant's Mountain at the entrance to the Bosphorus, where Elijah is supposed to have been buried; the ruined walls and towers built by the Genoese in their palmy days of the fourteenth century; the kiosk of the Khedive at Tchiboukli, its steep winding road leading to the Polish Farms which he had climbed many times — once so joyously. Now to look at it made him heavy-hearted and he turned to the opposite coast and pointed out Buyukdere and then Therapia, its charming water front lined with embassies.

The Bosphorus was beautiful this morning

as a dream of paradise, its waters reflecting opalescent hues, its atmosphere surcharged with misty color. The Thralls were enchanted with the Turkish villas reaching in terraces up the steep shores; with the quaint antique boats they passed, rigged as the galleys of old; with the dreamy Oriental beauty of it all.

Soon they came in sight of the towers of Mohammed,—and as they passed the bend at Roumeli Hissar, saw Robert College standing proudly on the hill, its stars and stripes welcoming compatriots. Then they slipped on down, past Arnaoutkeuy with its quaint quay; past the palace of Beylerbey, and the still more imposing palace of Dolma Baghtcheh; until, facing the charming Seraglio Point and the blue open waters of the Marmora, they came to anchor at Galata amid a swarm of soft sea-gulls and a mad tangle of native boats.

In this short hour they had become fast friends. Mr. Thrall proved to be one of those frank, simple, warm-hearted men—more common in the West than on the Atlantic Coast—who give their hearts to those they like, and do not hesitate to show it.

They invited Carver to call at their hotel,

and he in turn offered his services to show them about the city for the three days of their stay — an offer which they were very glad to accept.

They exchanged cards, and now came the rush of disembarking. Carver helped them at the customs, fending off the howling mob of hamals, who hurled themselves fiercely on strangers disembarking. As they were generous with their tips they were soon through and off for the Pera Palace, taking him in their carriage as far as Galata Bridge where good-bys were said; then they continued on up the hill while he went to his boat — having arranged to call for them that evening and show them the strange sights of Ramazan, the only time of the Mohammedan year when the Turks go about after sunset.

Soon after sunset Carver called for them at their hotel and they began their sight-seeing. First they went into a mosque and saw the service — a thing impossible but a few months ago, before Turkey was free. Then they went into a quaint Turkish restaurant where they had some Turkish refreshments and Mr. Thrall and Carver

tried a narghileh, the famous Oriental water-pipe.

An Arab with a white turban indicating his theological training, who had been sitting near them, looked several times at the Thralls, and on going out, stopped a moment in passing and said something in Arabic. The Thralls responded also in Arabic, and his face broke into a most winning and friendly smile as he left them. Carver was mystified. He thought it must be some secret society, a branch of the Masons perhaps, but he was too polite to ask.

Next he took them to see Kara Guez, the Turkish Punch and Judy show. Fortunate for the Thralls that they knew no Turkish, for the language of the little play is extremely pornographic.

While they were waiting for the show to start, something led the conversation to the Bahai movement. Mrs. Thrall, it seems, was a Bahai, and was on her way to Acca to visit Abdul Baha, the head of its faith. She told Carver something of its universal principles,—its platform of peace, of internationalism; its opposition to racial and religious prejudice; its declaration of the

essential unity of all religions. Carver listened eagerly.

"Tell me," he asked her — "would an American who was a Bahai think it right to adopt Mohammedanism in order to marry a Mohammedan?"

"Why not? All religions are one. This also is of the truth. In fact, one of my best friends, Herbert Weyland, did that very thing."

"Is that so? But could your friend conscientiously call himself a Mohammedan just in order to marry?"

"Why not? All one has to do to become a Mohammedan is to accept and repeat before a witness their creed, 'I believe that God is God, and that Mohammed is his prophet.' Weyland, being a Bahai, could easily do that, as Bahais believe in the truth and validity of all God's messengers."

"Do they believe Mohammed was a true prophet, then?"

"Certainly. Why, even many Christians believe that — Unitarians, for instance."

This made a deep impression on Carver. "Tell me about this Bahai faith," he said, after a pause.

"It is a universal religion, which unites all races and all creeds."

An idea dawned upon him. "Excuse me for asking," he said, "but was that Arab who spoke to you tonight a Bahai?"

"Yes."

"How remarkable! And you had never seen him before?"

"Never."

"But how did he know you were Bahais?"

"By this ring"—and she held up her hand on the little finger of which was a ring, a red seal stone engraved with peculiar markings.

"That is the name of God in ancient Arabic," she said. "They are the same words with which he greeted me. Such is the love and unity of the Bahai brotherhood that it enables me to reach the heart of these Orientals, you see, more deeply in a few days than you have been able to do in as many years."

"That is wonderful. I thought it was just one of the freak religions of the day."

"No, it is very sane and reasonable," she said. "We Bahais believe it is to be the great world religion of the future."

Carver made up his mind that he would investigate further this interesting movement, especially as it seemed so opportunely to fit his own problem of conflict between love and religion.

It was long past midnight when he ushered the Thralls back to their hotel, where he also spent the night as it was too late for him to get back to the college. The next day he saw the Thralls off on the steamer for Egypt, which they were to visit on their way to see Abdul Baha in his prison home at Acca.

These few days with the Thralls had proved very pleasant to Carver, and had absorbed his attention during the short period of idleness before the fall term began — a period which otherwise might have proved full of useless sorrow and regret for Ayesha.

They parted the best of friends, with that cordiality which is so characteristic of Americans, and good friends they remained ever after; for the bond of a common love for Constantinople unites tourists in a sort of Masonic brotherhood.

CHAPTER XI

AUTUMN DAYS



ARVER had dreaded coming back to Hissar — the pride of a man rebelling against condolence, against the humiliation of defeat in love, — humiliation patent enough to all, for Hissar was a small community and all its members lived under the limelight. His love for Ayesha had been known, and his disappointment was of course equally known.

Yet outwardly all went on as before. No word was said to him of this hurt which rankled in his heart. The college work kept him busy, and fortunately he was not thrown in contact with Ayesha — or he would have had his fight to forget all for nothing. As it was, the positive suffering had gone; he felt resigned and cherished only a void which no one else could fill.

In November an event happened which

fully occupied Carver's attention and caused him to forget, so far as one can forget, his disappointment. This event was no other than a strike on the part of the students which reached formidable dimensions. It centered about Carver himself, who in an effort for discipline had procured the suspension of three disobedient seniors. As no junior or senior had ever been suspended before, a general spirit of disrespect and insubordination had grown up in the higher classes. To break up this fatal spirit was the purpose of Carver in establishing a precedent. The new departure was met, as are all innovations in the East, by resentment and opposition. The whole senior class went on a strike and were suspended in a body by the faculty. They remained in the city, sending messages back and forth to the juniors, who organized a universal strike among the students.

Meetings were held each night in the dormitories, fiery speeches made, plans of violence formed in secret. Stones were thrown through professors' windows — the large lantern in the center of the court was repeatedly broken — and more and more rough

deeds took place. Some boys even armed themselves with knives and revolvers.

The chief resentment of the students was directed against Carver. Formerly beloved by them and a general favorite, he now received hisses and hoots as he passed through their midst. As it happened, the two leaders of the strike — captain and lieutenant as they were called — had been members of a pet club of his which had met weekly in his room to discuss philosophy. These boys who had been his best friends among the students now were using all their energy and ability against him and the college.

No greater or more valuable experience could have happened to Carver. Nothing is so dangerous as success, nothing so fatal as popularity. He had enjoyed the boys' smiles and friendship — now he steeled himself to enjoy also their scowls and hatred. He knew in embryo what is the feeling of a ruler who ventures upon a measure which, though needed, is offensive to the people. He saw that to accomplish things worth while in this world, one must get over sentiment — one must cease to seek gratitude as a reward for one's efforts — one must be as ready to

face storm and thunder as to bask in pleasant sunshine.

Never before had Carver met hatred, living continuously in its midst as he now had to do, daily, for almost a month. A quality of iron entered into his soul which was much needed there. Never after was he to quail at the disagreeable task as he had always done before — never after was he as sensitive as a woman to harsh words and angry frowns.

In the midst of these events he had occasion to call early in the evening at the house of Professor Sturdy for some papers. They were still at table. As he waited in the reception room, hearing the laughter and confused talk, a voice struck his ear which made him turn in his chair — a voice whose subtle, sunshiny music had before this penetrated and warmed his heart, but which now, belonging to another man, turned his heart cold and thrust knives into it. The servant came with the message that he was to join the dinner party for a cup of coffee; but he excused himself and left immediately. The sore was opened up again — and a long tramp in the moonlight over barren hills, which

failed to ward off a fretful sleep, was the result.

The next few days more than ever in his life, Carver longed for feminine consolation — for bright eyes, no matter whose, to look into his — for a sympathetic voice to soothe his heart.

At last the strike was over. The seniors were allowed back, but it was a victory for authority and order in the college. Carver's action had shown the students that he could not be trifled with, and won him a respect which he had not received from them before. In a short time, such is the changeable nature of Orientals, Carver and the boys became good friends again and the college work went on as before. It was now nearing the Christmas vacation, and Carver felt the need of getting away from the school environment for a time and of throwing off from his mind the anxieties and cares of the past month.

Just as the thought began to occur to him of taking a trip to Egypt again and of visiting Abdul Baha en route, a letter came which settled his plans more vividly in this direction. It was from the Thralls. They described

their visit to Abdul Baha in glowing terms and urged him to visit Acca if he had an opportunity. Carver was so interested in their description of the Persian leader that he decided to go to Egypt for his Christmas vacation and visit Acca on his way back. The little trip would do him good and would give him an opportunity to see one of the world's great men, for such Abdul Baha seemed undoubtedly to be. The president of the college kindly extended his vacation so as to make this journey possible.

A few days before Christmas he took passage on the fast Roumanian line for Egypt, and Christmas day found him in sunny Cairo, enjoying the tropical beauty of palms and verdant foliage in a climate so mild that he could sit out of doors all day. He did not stay long in Cairo, however. He felt somewhat lonesome and blue, brooding over Ayesha, who had been so intimately connected with his first visit there. He packed up and went to Port Said, from which he took a P. and O. steamer for Haifa.

CHAPTER XII

A VISIT TO ACCA




THE next day but one, early in the morning, the little steamer was nearing Haifa. It was still dark when Carver came on deck. The stars still shone, though their tropical brilliancy was already paling before dawn. Over the stern hung a beautiful crescent moon athwart the sky, holding in its silver cup the morning star. On the starboard, land was already in sight, the dim outlines of Mount Carmel coming into prominence as the pale yellow tints of sunrise accentuated its purple masses.

Carver thought he had never seen anything so beautiful, so peaceful, so inspiring. It seemed a fitting prelude to a visit to one whom so many, near and far, looked upon as very holy. He was prepared to find in Abdul Baha a spiritual giant. He half hoped even that in this Persian teacher who had

suffered exile and imprisonment for his teachings, he might discover the Master he had searched for all his life and failed to find; for in all whom he had met of great men and of wise he had not as yet seen one in whom he confided wholly — whose soul was so great, so wise, so divine as to compel a humble trust and following.

It was half daylight when the steamer came to anchor in the harbor of Haifa and a small boat carried Carver ashore. He ate breakfast at a native inn and as soon as it seemed polite hunted up Selim, the nephew of Abdul Baha, whose address had been given him by Mrs. Thrall. He found that Abdul Baha was in Acca, five miles away, in his prison home of forty years which he was free now to leave did he choose to do so. A carriage was engaged and Selim kindly went with Carver to arrange an audience with Abdul Baha.

The drive to Acca along the seashore, the only route possible in the lack of roads, was extremely beautiful. The shore line followed an exquisite curve of some five miles — on one side the sparkling amethyst waters of the sea; on the other the Syrian



desert and the purple peaks of the Lebanons far away; while at the end of the curve glistened the white roofs of Acca.

This quaint little town, for years a penal colony of Turkey, was at last reached; the carriage clattered over the cobblestones of a narrow street and stopped at the entrance to the compound set apart for Abdul Baha. While the guide went to request an interview, Carver was entertained at the little guard room by a few black-bearded Persians whose kindly smiles and warm welcome made him feel at home.

Was he a Bahai? No, but he wished very much to see Abdul Baha. At the mention of this name a look of the greatest love and devotion transfused the faces of the Persians and one of them murmured "Inshallah," (*God willing*). They questioned him about his nationality, his work and his religion, and he was already feeling much at home with them when his guide came back and beckoned him impressively. Abdul Baha would see him and was now awaiting him. From the guard room he was led across the court and up a long, narrow flight of stone steps which mounted to the second story.

Abdul Baha was seated in a corner of the divan which ran about three sides of the simple Oriental room into which Carver was ushered. Two tables for serving coffee constituted the only other furniture. Yet the room did not seem bare, for it was filled with the living presence of a master of men.

Carver was somewhat embarrassed as to how he should greet Abdul Baha. His guide had prostrated himself and kissed the Master's robe. Carver could not bring himself to this sign of Oriental respect, nor did Abdul Baha wait for any such attention but arose from his couch and coming up to Carver took him in his arms with infinite affection. It seemed to Carver that during this embrace a great universal love beat from the heart of Abdul Baha into his, and he felt happy, contented, and at peace with the world.

Abdul Baha then motioned to him to be seated and began to speak to him of the teachings of Baha Allah, the founder of the Bahai movement — his words being translated by Selim.

"Praise God that you are here," he said. "Is not this a miracle, that you have come to me from the other side of the world, and

that we can be friends? The day of hatred and distrust is past. You are an American and I am a Persian, but we understand each other. We wish each other no harm. Rather we are enkindled with the fire of love and union.

“Thank God that in this century of light and progress all mankind shall be ushered into the tents of nearness, all races shall associate as brothers, and all religions become one.

“Baha Allah said, ‘Do ye know why we have created ye from one clay? That no one should glorify himself above the other. Ye must be as one soul, walking with the same feet, eating with one mouth, and living in one land, that ye may manifest the signs of unity and the spirit of oneness.’

“Baha Allah called the world to unity and love and his word shall not be without effect. Why should countries be divided one against the other? Why should the races of the world hate one another? These are animal qualities and not of God, for He desires not hatred but love and union.

“Think how love and yearning are the causes of progress, and hatred and separation

the causes of ruin. Your mother, through the power of God, loved you into being — but the hatred of war maims and kills. Consider, did love ever destroy? And did hatred ever create? No, in truth, love is the cause of all life; hatred the cause of all death.

“Reflect a little. What is it that holds together the particles of matter? Is it not attraction? And when that attractive force ceases does not matter disintegrate and perish? What is that spark of life in you which changes meat and drink into flesh and blood and unifies all the functions of your body? Does your stomach quarrel with your mouth? Are your eyes and ears engaged in strife? Do your legs hate each other? No, by God they are engaged in the greatest love and union through the power of the spirit which pervades them.

“So should be this handful of humanity. Men should be joined in spiritual love and union. They should co-operate, and not fight the one against the other. Why do they fight? There is enough land to feed all. There is enough space to live and move in. Why then do mankind fight?

“It is from ignorance, from prejudice,

from the false sense of patriotism. Baha Allah said 'Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country — let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind.'

"These strifes and bloodshed must cease, and all men be as one kindred and family. It will come, praise God, through the power of the Holy Spirit; for God has chosen this century to be the century of divine gifts to mankind, and His love shall pervade mankind, as the spirit does your body, until absolute union and harmony prevail.

"You are a seeker, or you would not have come here to this little town of Acca. May you be guided to the truth and grow daily in the love of God."

Abdul Baha was now on the point of bringing the interview to an end, when Carver interrupted with an eager question which had been in his mind ever since the Thralls had first told him of this movement.

"What is the relation of Bahaism to Christianity?" he asked. "Does it seek to supersede it?"

"No!" replied Abdul Baha. "Bahaism does not displace or supersede Christianity, but completes it and fulfills its meaning."

“How do you mean?”

“Is it not the teaching of Christ and the aim of His church to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, and to help humanity to acquire the divine attributes of mercy and faith and love?”

“Yes,” responded Carver.

“And this was the sole aim of Baha Allah,” continued the Master. “The Bahais seek only to help bring the Kingdom to pass. Their aim is not to destroy religion but to build it up. No, praise be to God. All truth is one. Go home, work in your church. Be the best Christian you can and that will be to be also a good Bahai.”

Abdul Baha now showed that the interview was over, and once more embracing Carver dismissed him with these words: “You have a beautiful spirit, you desire truth above all things. Be on fire with the love of God. These are great days. The call of the Kingdom will soon be heard from all horizons.”

As Carver left the presence of this inspired leader, he felt a great glow and spiritual power which seemed to flood his being with infinite love and yearning. Was Abdul Baha the Master he had sought unconsciously

across the years — the one living man who could interpret absolutely to him truth?

The next day Carver drove back to Haifa and was invited to the Persian guest-house on Mount Carmel, built by one of the wealthy Persian Bahais to entertain the pilgrims who often travelled thousands of miles to visit the head of their faith. At this time there were some fifteen guests in it, Mohammedans, Zoroastrians and Jews, who had been brought together by the amalgamating power of the Bahai movement. Carver thus enjoyed the rare privilege of living for a day in true Oriental fashion with these children of the East.

Their house-keeping was very simple. They ate mostly with their fingers, having few dishes to be washed; and after lunch all rolled themselves up in blankets and lay down on the large sedita running round the room, in order to take their midday siesta. In the middle of the afternoon they began to awake, one by one, and tea was prepared in Persian fashion, sweetened almost to a syrup.

As they sipped the tea they told thrilling stories of the early heroes of their faith, men

who had been imprisoned in deep dungeons, or put to death with terrible cruelty because of their devotion to the Bahaist cause. Some of those present had seen their parents martyred — some had been imprisoned for years — some had followed Baha Allah and his family in their exile to Acca, suffering exposure, hunger, and disease such as might shake the strongest faith. Yet they spoke of these things cheerfully, as if they were of no consequence because of the joy that filled their lives.

In this brief stay of two days, Carver was very much impressed with the earnestness and joy of living which seemed to characterize all the followers of Abdul Baha. He felt that there must be great spiritual power in this movement, to command the happy and steadfast allegiance of its devotees even in the midst of suffering and persecution.

On the morning of his departure Abdul Baha happened to be in Haifa and he sent for Carver to bid him farewell. Carver was ushered at an early hour into the Master's bedroom; but Abdul Baha, he found, had already been up for hours, dictating letters and reading.

Once more he felt himself in the warm clasp of Abdul Baha's arms. He was then motioned to be seated.

"Are you happy?" asked the Persian sage as he fixed his brilliant, searching eyes upon Carver.

"Yes," answered Carver, a little hesitatingly.

"Are you very happy?"

Carver had to be honest. "No," he answered, thinking of Ayesha.

"Do not grieve. All will come out well. Ayesha loves you."

Carver started from his chair. How did Abdul Baha know about his love for Ayesha? Did he possess the power of reading minds? It would almost seem so, from the piercing quality of those eyes which seemed to lay bare one's very soul.

Carver managed to stammer — "But how can we marry? Would it be right for me to become a Mohammedan?"

"That is a matter which your own conscience must solve. Some day the world will realize the oneness of all spiritual truth."

Abdul Baha came up to Carver and patted his cheek in a fatherly way. "But you need

not worry about that. You will not have to turn Mohammedan in order to marry Ayesha. God willing, you will be happy soon."

With these words the Master gave Carver a long farewell embrace and kissed him on the forehead, saying, "You have a beautiful soul. Seek only the welfare of humanity, and all else will come to you. I see you have a lofty destiny to fulfill. You must strive day and night to become perfected, to reach nearer to God, to love and serve mankind. This is the way to be happy."

With these words he showed the visit was at an end, and Carver retired, carrying with him undying faith and aspirations which had been awakened by this great spiritual leader. That afternoon he boarded a steamer for Constantinople and sat watching the white town of Acca disappear from view, the purple peak of Mount Carmel still lingering on the horizon with the beautiful orange glow of sunset behind it.

Carver did not feel like eating. He retired early to his stateroom, trying to digest his many impressions of the last two days. The cheering prophecy of Abdul Baha still rang in his ears. How could Ayesha marry him when

she was engaged to another? Yet it might be! There was still hope. He dropped asleep with more of happiness and spiritual upliftment than he had known for months.

CHAPTER XIII

THE RETURN



WHEN Carver came to breakfast the next morning he was agreeably surprised to find opposite him at the table Miss Frazier, of the American College. She was just as much surprised to see him. She was on her way back from Jerusalem, which she had visited with other friends. They had gone back to Constantinople by way of Alexandria, but having a few more days at her disposal Miss Frazier had taken the longer way home in order to see Beyreuth, the Lebanons, and the coast of Asia Minor. She seemed very glad to meet Carver and after breakfast they went up on deck and sat there looking out over the misty blue of the Mediterranean toward the Lebanon mountains, which were already coming into view.

"I haven't seen you much at our college this winter," said Miss Frazier, whether

mischievously or not Carver could not tell. She must have known the reason.

"No, I have been very busy," replied Carver, turning it off in this way. "You know we had some difficulties at Robert College which kept my hands full."

"Yes, I heard something about it. It was all about you, I hear. Do tell me the whole story. Now I can find out at first hand."

Carver shrank from going over again this struggle which had been hashed and rehashed, discussed and argued about hour by hour for so many days that he had sought this trip to Egypt and Acca chiefly in order to throw the whole thing off his mind. For he had found that talking about an unpleasant experience simply renews the worry and does no good. However, he was obliged for politeness' sake to rehearse the chief details of the strike, to which Miss Frazier listened with the greatest interest. Then, woman-like, she abruptly changed the subject with a question which quite threw Carver off his guard.

"Have you heard about Ayesha?"

Carver felt that he was blushing to the

roots of his hair. "No," he managed to stammer. The enchanted word with which Solomon was wont to open solid rocks held no more of magic charm than did this name "Ayesha" for Carver. "What?"

"Oh, nothing much — but her engagement with Reshid Bey is all off. Turks are not very steadfast, you know, not even as steadfast as the changeable American."

Carver felt an innuendo in this. He could not utter the thought which was in his heart — that for him at least Destiny had laid a net from whose meshes no caprice nor reasoning could free him. This news had flooded his whole being with a great tide of love and hope and dizzy expectation.

"She is very unhappy," Miss Frazier added, looking at him sympathetically. "I think she longs for true friendship. She has been so educated in our American ways that I am afraid she could not marry happily in her own race."

"Perhaps not," said Carver, and looked in silence over the snowy peaks of the Lebanons into the heavenly expanse of blue beyond. The sun shone dazzlingly on blue sparkling waters — the atmosphere lay like opal upon

the distant shore. Nature, radiant, greeted the radiance in his soul. He jumped up from his chair, and not being able to dance for joy, proposed to Miss Frazier a walk about the deck. His feet had wings, but from that hour the slow coast steamer seemed merely to crawl through the water.

The details of the rest of the trip made little impression on Carver. Afterwards he recollected dimly going ashore while the steamer lay to at Beyreuth, visiting the Protestant College there, and taking a trip by rail into the Lebanons. But through all this he moved as in a dream — and he yearned for the days to pass that should bring him to Constantinople and to Ayesha.

After Beyreuth the steamer made no further stops going north until they reached Smyrna. Here alarming news came to their ears. Abdul Hamid, catching the Young Turks unawares, had sprung a coup d'état upon them. For some months he had been heavily bribing the soldiers of the Young Turk army in Constantinople; and suddenly putting forth the power he had been acquiring in secret, he overturned the government, closed the Parliament, attacked the Cabinet,

—killing some of the leaders of the Young Turk party and driving the rest into flight or concealment. The city of Constantinople once more lay in his hands, and the Old Turks returned to their former complacency and graft. All who had taken part in the movement of liberation were in great danger.

The same dread simultaneously came to Carver and Miss Frazier.

“Ayesha!” said the latter. “What has come of her!”

The joyous anticipations with which Carver faced his return to Ayesha gave place to a terrible anxiety and fear. Ayesha was a conspicuous figure among the New Women of Turkey. She had lectured and written ardently in behalf of the new freedom. No one woman would be so singled out for punishment as she. Moreover, by her utter disregard of Turkish conventions and religious prejudices she had made herself hated by the clergy who were now, with the aid of Abdul Hamid, all-powerful. Undoubtedly her life was in danger.

Early the next morning, before daylight, Carver got up and paced the deck. He could not sleep. Finally in the ashen gray of dawn

he saw the Marmora Islands far ahead, and the dim coast line pointing like a ghostly finger to the city of dreams and of tragedies. Constantinople began to emerge rapidly from the undistinguished distance, and the sun, fiery red, rising like molten iron from the sea, cast its shafts of light upon the domes and towers of the Peerless City. Red, red the gleams of light; and red a fitting symbol for the blood that from the days of Constantine had dyed her streets and washed down to her Marmora. It was no longer a city of fairy-like beauty to Carver, but a terrible dungeon over which ruled that iron man, Abdul Hamid.

Though he was due that morning at his classes, his only thought was to reach Ayesha, if she were still alive. He helped Miss Frazier to disembark and they took a small boat to row them across the Bosphorus.

The city lay peaceful in its morning light. St. Sophia sent its dome toward heaven as unconcernedly as it had done for twelve hundred years; the palace of Dolma Baghtcheh was reflected in delicate tints along the Bosphorus; and no outward indication betrayed the volcanic force of the tyrant's


power. They had learned while landing, from the officials on the quay, that the American College was unharmed. That news relieved somewhat their anxiety as they sped swiftly through the dancing wavelets of the Bosphorus, their *kayik* propelled by two strong oarsmen.

On landing they took a carriage and drove up the winding hill road to the college. They reached the gate at last, and within all seemed as usual.

“Buyurun” (*Welcome*), said Luka, the Montenegrin gate-keeper; and in answer to their anxious question whether all was well, “Hepshi pek eyi” (*Everything is well*).

They hurried up the path to the reception hall, and found within a nervous group of women who welcomed Miss Frazier with more than the usual feminine gusto and kisses. For a moment it seemed to Carver as if he were to share in the same hearty welcome, kisses and all; for he was the first outside man they had seen for a week, and the danger they had been in made even the most bitterly misanthropic female welcome the arrival of a man.

“How did you get here safely?”



"Is the city safe?"

"Aren't they still shooting?"

"Did you see those twenty men hanging on the bridge?"

This storm of questions from the excited teachers made Carver laugh. He explained that everything seemed peaceful as they came through. However, terrible things had happened, as he found out later; and there had been such turmoil and danger that the American College had closed its gates and kept within its walls for a week, fearing to go even to the near-by market.

Now that all seemed safe, with so many female eyes upon him, he could ask only with great embarrassment and blushing the question which had been foremost upon his lips.

"How is Ayesha?"

"Do you want to see her?" queried the president. "If you will wait in this little reception room I will send her in to you."

To his surprise suppressed laughter followed him as he was ushered into the quiet reception room and the door was closed behind him. Well, they could laugh at him if only Ayesha were safe; and surely they would not laugh if she were in danger, so Carver felt a rising

barometer, indicating fair weather and a possible golden sunshine ahead. To see Ayesha would be joy; to see her safe would be miraculous; to see her perspectively his own, — this inchoate thought was stirring his imagination and causing his heart to pound at his ribs when the hall door opened and a man came in and stood before him, dressed in the costume of a Greek servant, with wide, baggy trousers and short little jacket, a large fez pulled down to the ears.

Carver got up hastily, his joy falling terribly. He feared the servant was sent to announce some disaster, or that Ayesha could not see him.

He heard a silvery laugh. It came from the Greek servant — but it did not sound like a man's laugh. He saw a sweet, rosy mouth break into smiles, disclosing pearly teeth delicate and white. He saw two dark eyes glow luminously into his — and he gathered into his arms without question or ado the fairest creature in the world. She lay there lovingly, trustingly, abandoning herself for the first time to a man's strong embrace and passionate caresses. It was a complete surrender, a capitulation made with-

out parley — and Carver inwardly blessed Abdul Hamid and his friends the Old Turks for this change of attitude.

He remembered reading once how a girl had accepted a much rejected suitor during a thunder storm. In the hour of danger woman cleaves to man — the aggressive, the bold, the protector. At least most women do, and Carver thanked God that in this respect Ayesha was like other women.

He freed her from his arms and held her face between his hands, drinking in the glory of her eyes, which spoke of love at last. The veils were down. The door to the inner chamber of her soul lay open to the one she loved.

It seemed no time for words, nor did Ayesha's mouth just then seem framed for utterance; it was employed elsewhere, in a manner which lovers use, and which is above all speech.

At last Ayesha asked mischievously, "How do you like me in this costume?"

"Are you in disguise?"

"It is safer for me just now to be a Greek woman than a Turkish woman."

"Ayesha, have you been in danger?" and

Carver again smothered her in his arms, in dread at the mere thought that that body so warm, so slender in his embrace, might have been cold and stiff in death. The miracle of the human body, as that of the soul, is revealed only to lovers.

Ayesha explained that she had for some days remained concealed in the cistern while the college was in daily danger of being searched. Her father's house had been ransacked for her, but they had so far refrained from disturbing the American College.

"But supposing a wave of fanaticism should sweep over the city? Would the American flag protect you then?"

Ayesha did not answer.

"Where is the American stationnaire? Have they not sent up bluejackets to protect the college?"

The "Scorpion" was in Italy undergoing repairs, as futile as most American diplomacy had proved in the East.

"You must leave here, Ayesha!" Carver said emphatically.

"Why?"

"Because you are still in danger."

"I am not afraid to die."

"Are you not willing to live — for me?"

She looked into his eyes tenderly and smiled. "It *would* be pleasanter!" she said.

"Then let me save you. Flee from here."

"Where?"

"To America, the land of the free — to my home."

Ayesha looked down and seemed to be studying the design in the carpet.

Carver grasped her by the shoulders and lifted her face to his. "Will you?"

She looked down again, and murmured so low that only the ear of a lover could hear — "Evet, effendim," which, being translated, means "Yes, my lord." And her now lord and master drawing her face again toward his, they sealed their promise with a kiss so sweet, so tender, that it seemed it must perfume all their future days.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FLIGHT



ARVER had forgotten, in making his plans of flight with Ayesha, that he was not free to depart so suddenly from Turkey. He was pacing the deck of the little Chirket steamer bearing him rapidly up the Bosphorus to Bebek, intent upon packing his baggage and fleeing with Ayesha, when for the first time it occurred to him that he could not in justice to his work, on such short notice, leave the College. It would take some months to get a teacher over from America to fill his place. Yet his love for Ayesha came near to overpowering every sense of duty.

Luck was in his favor. He found upon reaching the college that one of the American teachers from an interior mission school was stranded in Constantinople and had come up to Bebek that very day to look for a position. The president was finally

persuaded to accept Carver's resignation and to instate the new applicant in his position. Carver, greatly relieved, packed his things and engaged passage for two on a French steamer which was sailing the next day for Marseilles. The captain, on hearing his story, gave him promise of protection for Ayesha. The next step was to get her on board in safety.

The American Embassy was turned to for aid. They furnished a plan which seemed to promise success, in spite of the fact that the American College for Girls — as Carver now learned — was watched day and night by spies who lay in wait for Ayesha.

That night, which fortunately proved dark and cloudy, Carver with two kavasses from the Embassy crossed the Bosphorus in the Embassy launch and took a carriage up to the college. A half hour later Carver, accompanied by the two others in the uniform of kavass, descended the steps of the college. As they passed out of the college gate, Carver thought he distinguished a dark form glide away in the direction of the quay.

They entered their carriage and drove rapidly down hill. As they neared the quay,

four armed horsemen suddenly barred their path.

"Nerede?" called the leader, sternly.

"To Pera!"

"Kim siniz?" (*Who are you?*)

"Americans, from the Embassy," cried one of the kavasses.

The captain held a lantern up to each one in turn. Upon seeing the uniforms of the kavasses he passed them by and turned to Carver.

"Your passport!" he demanded. Carver took his passport from his pocket and submitted it to the Turkish officer, who scanned it carefully and compared its description point by point with Carver's face. He seemed satisfied, for he returned the passport with a grunted "Pek eyi" (*All right*) and saluting, wheeled away. A few minutes later they were in their launch speeding over the dark water toward "La Liberté," the French boat lying at anchor near the quay of Galata.

Carver breathed a sigh of relief as they neared the black hull—but prematurely so, for around the stern shot a Turkish police-boat which hailed them threateningly.

"Where are you going," asked the police officer, as his boat came alongside the launch.

"I have important business with the captain," answered Carver.

"You cannot go on the boat at this hour! It is yasak."

That terrible word "yasak" (*forbidden*) barred the way to all advance. When that word was spoken by an official of the Sultan, no pleas or threats were of avail. It might almost be taken as the symbol of the tyrant's rule, the word most used and most feared during his reign of thirty-three years — in which there existed neither in writing nor speech any word meaning "freedom." Just now it seemed a dreadful word, an insuperable bar to success.

Carver, however, was provided for such an emergency. "Hakim im!" he said—(*I am a doctor.*) "I have been called to attend the captain," and showed his medicine case and a passport which had formerly belonged to an American doctor and which some friends had resurrected for the occasion.

Would the Turkish officer read carefully the passport? All would be up with them if he did — for the passport was out of

date and its description did not fit Carver at all. The doctor's complexion was dark, while Carver's was light; the doctor's eyes brown while Carver's were blue; and worst of all, the doctor was described as bald, while Carver had a heavy head of hair. It was a moment of terrible suspense.

The Turk solemnly unfolded the passport and scanned it carefully by his lantern, reading it line by line, and looking at Carver's face as he read the detailed description.

"Pek eyi," he said abruptly as he handed the passport back. He had been reading it upside down. Thus did Turkish ignorance save the day for Carver.

The officer waved his hand in a grudging permission and steamed away, leaving Carver free to moor alongside "*La Liberté*." He climbed aboard the boat with one of the kavasses, while the second one remained in charge of the launch. Presently Carver came down the rope ladder with his kavass, and started for the quay.

Once more the police captain hailed him and came alongside, looking suspiciously into the launch to see if the same number of people came off "*La Liberté*" as went aboard.

He was there to make sure that no one left Turkey save by daylight, and from the customs quay alongside which the boat would moor the next day—for it was just as difficult to leave Turkey as to enter it. Had one of Carver's party remained on the boat it would have been searched the next day from bow to stern and from deck to keel. However, he seemed satisfied and Carver with the two kavasses was allowed to land at the quay and drive up to the Embassy.

The next morning, half an hour before "La Liberté" was to sail, Carver came aboard with his baggage and his passport properly viséd for departure. At twelve o'clock the steamer weighed anchor and slowly revolving with the aid of two fierce little tugs steamed tranquilly out of the Bosphorus and passed Seraglio Point into the Sea of Marmora, leaving Constantinople like a city of enchantment — dazzlingly beautiful with its dreamy heat-haze — in the caresses of its lover, the sea. Carver watched with satisfaction the shores of the Bosphorus drop out of sight, the minarets and towers of Stamboul merge into the distant horizon — while "La Liberté" joyously plowed the

fresh foam from its bow speeding toward home and freedom.

When the steamer cleared Smyrna, the last Turkish port, and turned seaward for Marseilles, a shrinking figure threw off the disguise of captain's boy and came on deck in the charming costume of a Turkish lady — with veil pushed up, however, showing the loveliness of an oval face, and a smile that spoke of happiness. It was Ayesha.

When the two kavasses had gone to the American College with Carver, one of them had stayed there, giving his costume to Ayesha, who thus disguised had been able to reach "La Liberté" with Carver. There she changed clothes again with the captain's boy, who returned with Carver to the Embassy in order to allay suspicion. Thanks to careful planning and to Destiny, Ayesha was now out of danger.

That evening a unique event took place in the saloon of "La Liberté," a ceremony of great interest, because it was the first time, perhaps in the history of the world, that an American man was to marry a Turkish girl.

Ayesha had been persuaded to undergo

this ceremony before reaching America, as it would greatly expedite matters in their travel. Let the virgin heart tell whether Ayesha gave a glad consent or not; and with what emotions, whether of trepidation or of joy, she approached the solemn moment of her troth to one of different race and creed. She had put on a white gown for the occasion, and instead of a veil a white yashmak was draped in Turkish fashion over her head, framing the exquisite contour of her face.

The fellow-passengers grouped themselves around the pair of lovers while a clergyman who happened to be on board married them by the Episcopal service. Those who were privileged to witness this event have said that it was the most romantic and appealing wedding they had ever seen; and that no bride ever looked as beautiful as Ayesha did, when she smiled tenderly upon her new-made husband and turned up to him to be kissed a face alight with joy and Oriental grace.

The captain gave a bridal dinner to the pair, at which Ayesha gracefully submitted to the name of Carver,—a loss of identity,

so far as name is concerned, which Turkish brides in their own land never undergo.

Three days later, days of golden sunshine and unruffled joy, they reached Naples and took passage in the "Canopic" for New York. Just as they were leaving the docks and steaming out to sea Carver opened a paper he had bought, and read something which made him suddenly start and exclaim, "Well, well!"

"What is it?" asked Ayesha.

"Constantinople has been captured by the Young Turks, and Abdul Hamid is deposed."

They looked at each other for a moment in silence.

"Dearest," said Carver gently, "I am sorry! Perhaps I took you from your country unfairly. Now you would be safe and free again to serve there. Do you wish to go back?"

Ayesha gave him a look of tender love and taking his arm led him, without saying a word, to the bow of the boat.

"Do you see where we are going?" she said. "It is not back to Turkey, but onward to a new country, to *your* country."

"But have you no regrets?"

"No, dearest Roland. Can you not understand that when a woman once gives her heart to a man, she is happy to follow him to the ends of the earth?"

"But we will still love Turkey! We can be of service to her, even in America. I can write, and you can lecture, as I have so long dreamed of our doing — and we can perhaps help to correct the bad impression my people have of yours. For I love your race, Ayesha, even as I love you."

They kissed each other and stood hand in hand looking out to sea, dreaming of the days that were to come.

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